

CAQ

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by JOHN PILGER

AIDS CONSPIRACY?



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pepper Madness

Thanks for raising questions about the use and abuse of pepper spray in your spring issue.

Lynne Wilson's article prompted me to look into pepper spray-related deaths in Canada. While my search covered only the last two years and just the four most populous provinces, I turned up five deaths that followed police use of the spray. Even if there are no other cases, that means Canada is, on a per capita basis, "keeping up with the Joneses" — our neighbours to the south. One fact that turned up is that of the five dead in Canada, three were schizophrenic.

It would be fascinating to see if, using the larger sample of deaths in the US, that statistic holds as the number grows. And if so — why?

That three mentally ill people have died here is an unspeakable tragedy in the midst of an unexamined abuse.

Keep up the good work.

JAMES MACKINNON, EDITOR

Monday Magazine, Victoria, BC, Canada

Population: Myth or Menace

In her article "Lie: Overpopulation is the Main Cause of Poverty, Environmental Degradation, and Instability" Hartmann presented no evidence to support her premise that overpopulation is a myth, yet went on to tell what the consequences of that myth are. Many of my numbers come from Lester Brown, *Full House*, W.W. Norton & Co., 1994.

1) Demographic alarmism. What Hartmann calls long-term trends toward stabilization are predicted to stabilize at over twice the present world population. That is, in the next 40 years Nigeria's population will grow by 190 million, Ethiopia's by 106 million, India's by 590 million, and China's by 490 million (i.e., 1.376 billion in these four countries alone). To suggest that these, and the many other growing countries, can handle this extra population is ludicrous. Also, Hardin's *Living Within Limits* shows that it is also a myth that birth rates decline with access to health, education, and employment. Besides, populations grow first, then stabilize, when health improves. Saying, as Hartmann does, that birth rates are declining in "virtually every region of the world" ignores a minor detail. Many small regions and few large ones exist, and large ones are growing (China, India, for example).

2) Smokescreen that obscures unequal power relations. Here Hartmann hits the nail on the head. The average number of people per square mile in affluent Europe, Japan, and the US is 480, compared to 92 per square mile in all of Central and South America. Yet, clearly the affluent countries with the power are also the most populous (in this case, 706 million in 10 affluent vs. 428 million in 20 poor countries). I do not include Asian countries (besides Japan) because of length limitations, but for example, Kampuchea has 146 people per square mile while Israel has 632! Clearly the power lies in the

hands of very populated countries. So we cannot blame the poor countries of the world for their putative population problems.

3) It masks the real cause of environmental degradation. No, given that the most influential (and therefore most consuming) countries are also very densely populated, they are also the cause of the environmental degradation, but it is still very much a population problem! If there were not so danged many wealthy people, the world would be in much better shape!

4) It serves as a tool of disinformation in national security circles. No doubt! After all, how many people know point #2 above? We are deceived into blaming population growth in Mexico (122 per square mile) or Brazil (48 per sq. mi., the US has 69) while ignoring the population of Japan (857), the Netherlands (958), of Great Britain (617), and even of Italy (499). Who has the population problem?

5) It reinforces the politics of scapegoating in the US. What else is new? If we knew the ranking of US population density, then perhaps we would hesitate to lay the blame.

Finally, think of the number of people as a rough indicator of the amount of available money. When the population grows, there is more money. Them that's got shall have. Thus, CEOs make more in a day than the average US worker makes in a year, and these workers make more in a week than those in poorer countries do in a year. Also, a large wealthy population requires a much larger resource base. Thus, Third World countries are the resource base, as is the earth. The world cannot indefinitely support the population it has now (environmental degradation is already out of control), so imagine a world in which everyone wants our standard of living. We must all learn to live simply, but with fewer people as well.

The conclusions can only be that a population problem exists, it is grave and it is destroying the beauty of the planet, and it is firmly rooted in the Powers that Be.

JAMES J. ROPER, PH.D.

Utah State University, Biology Dept.

Insinuations

Betsy Hartmann's article contains a number of clear-cut insinuations that are essentially lies themselves.

The first is that population control is a major factor in US policy, particularly foreign policy. In fact, the government's position on the mere existence of a population problem has been weak and vacillating at most. Indeed, Ronald Reagan's "Mexico City Policy" flatly denied that a population problem existed, and while a few in the current administration may admit to concern, they are neither a majority nor advocate it as their highest priority. Note, for example, that the Foreign Appropriations bill disproportionately cuts international family planning. Nor will anyone at EPA articulate a policy on population and the environment.

The second insinuation is all those who have valid concerns over population blame all world problems on that problem alone. In reality, nobody claims that solving the population problem will automatically eliminate poverty, environmental degradation or instability. A number do claim that not solving it must ultimately make it impossible to solve these and many other problems. Moreover, Hartmann's conclusion — that the world's still rapid population growth (more than the present US population every three years) will simply stop at an acceptable level of its own accord — is at best premature.

The third false insinuation is that all who actively promote smaller family sizes are closet racists with an evil hidden agenda. The truth is most who advocate measures to limit population growth do so as an integrated part of policies to improve women's and children's health and choices. The 1994 UN International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo make this clear.

The central question is how to solve the population problem in a humane and democratic fashion, since it is otherwise guaranteed to eventually solve itself — in a fashion nobody likes. The first, most important step is to recognize that the problem exists and will get worse before it gets better.

For these reasons, the false implications in this article can be called a significant contributor to poverty, environmental degradation, and instability. As Nafis Sadik said in her Keynote Address to the Cairo Conference, "Population programmes are above all investments in humanity. The first to benefit from such investments are the most vulnerable groups, the rural and urban poor, children and particularly women."

TIMOTHY F. HAVEL

Boston, Mass.

Left Position on Population Wrong

While overconsumption by the wealthy nations is both deplorable and a major contributor to the poverty of other areas of the world, and while there is ample evidence that overpopulation is being used to scapegoat our responsibility for this situation by blaming the suffering of the poor on overpopulation alone, it is patent nonsense to argue, as the liberal/left press seems increasingly inclined to do, that a population explosion is not occurring and is not at the root of the problem. (See Lester Brown's *Who Will Feed China?*) An examination of the population trend since the beginning of the Industrial Revolution, facilitated and compounded by a less-than-wise application of science, should redress this misunderstanding. The left, out of concern for the poor, substitutes human motivation, i.e., greed and power lust for the fact of out-of-control human reproduction. It thus does the same thing that the religious right does when it substitutes creationism for evolution because evolution contradicts its religious values/beliefs. It also places this element of the left in company with the Vati-

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The new global economy, with its rampant privatizations and downsizings, is creating a haven for money laundering and dirty investments. As long as the money rolls in, commercial banks aren't asking any questions.

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Reagan-Bush era documents show how "counter-terrorism" provided a powerful mechanism for solidifying Bush's power base and launching a broad range of national policy initiatives. A paper trail puts Bush at the center of secret wars, political murders, and America's convoluted oil politics in the Middle East.

Ashes of Racism, Fires of Terror: Government, Media, and Burning Black Churches

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Faced with the pattern of arson against black churches, the media, the administration, and law enforcement have failed to label the attacks terrorism or to address the historical and social context that makes racist violence not only possible, but inevitable.

Seeing Green: The A.I.D.ing of the Environment

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The mantra of sustainable development has replaced the dogma of anticommunism as the Agency for International Development continues to make the world safe for US investments. Now, AID's main post-Cold War function is peddling US technology repackaged in environmental green.

Insiders Blow the Whistle on Brookhaven Dangers

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Mounting evidence shows that the community near BNL is being poisoned by radioactive emissions that result from reckless disregard for public health and safety. While lab officials and tame politicians deny any problems, activists and whistleblowers are pushing to shut the facility down.

Tracking the Real Genocide AIDS: Conspiracy or Unnatural Disaster?

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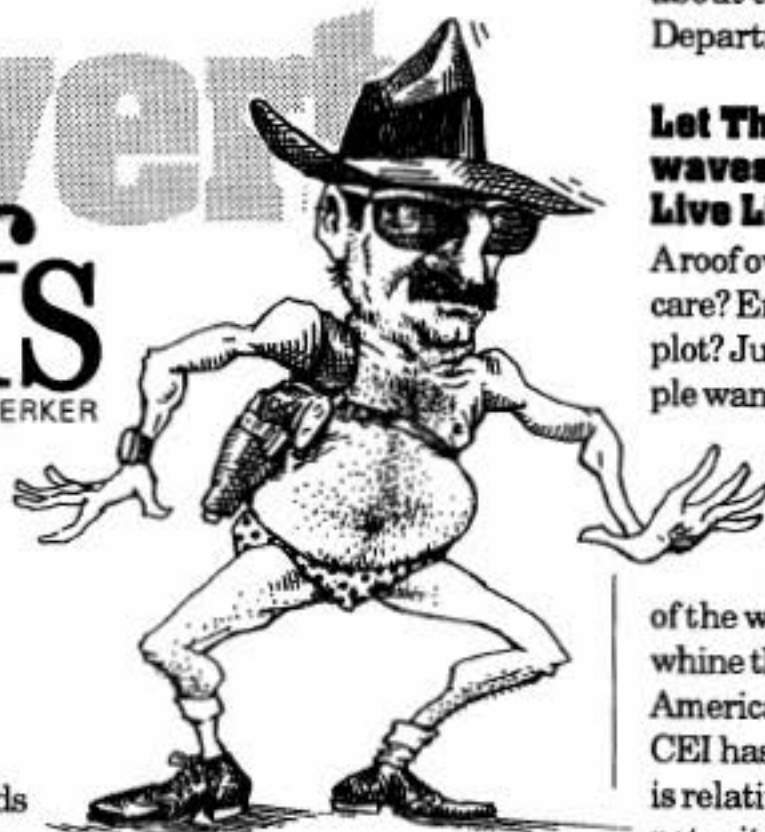
Theories that AIDS is a government conspiracy to destroy undesirable populations may make political sense, but are they supported by facts? Writing from prison, where he is an AIDS activist, Gilbert examines the evidence and context of institutional racism that surround the epidemic.

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Covert Briefs

ILLUSTRATIONS BY MATT WUERKER



Credi-bull

Since the Gulf War, thousands of vets have experienced debilitating and sometimes deadly illnesses; 60,000 have requested special screening to check for Gulf War syndrome. But the vets had a credibility problem: The Pentagon denied the existence of the syndrome and told them it was all in their heads.

In the winter 1992-93 issue of *CAQ*, Tod Ensign explored possible causes of the syndrome, detailed the extent of troop illness, and reported that international monitors had found traces of chemical weapons. Then, in an award-winning summer 1995 *CAQ* article, Dennis Bernstein detailed the exposure of US troops to chemical weapons when they exploded Iraqi ordnance and how the Pentagon and White House lied to cover up the incidents.

But *CAQ* also had a credibility problem: The military denied everything. On April 26, 1995, Assistant Secretary of Defense John Deutch testified at confirmation hearings for his appointment as CIA director. Repeatedly asked if there was no evidence of chemical weapons Deutch replied unequivocally: "That's correct."

Then, lo and behold, this spring, Pentagon officials admitted that US troops had been exposed to sarin

(the same deadly nerve agent used in the Tokyo subway attacks), and to mustard gas (a blistering agent that can burn flesh and lungs). And, it turns out, top government officials had known it all along: A Nov. 12, 1991 military action report, not released to the public but obtained by Bernstein, confirmed that when US troops exploded Iraqi bunkers in Kamisiyah, chemical weapons agents were released. The priority document had been prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff and sent to the DIA, CIA, White House situation room, and the Secretary of State.

Finally, this August, the Pentagon volunteered that there had been no fewer than seven such incidents. Not to worry, they reassured, there is no proven link between exposure to toxic chemicals and ill-effects suffered — or imagined — by troops.

Suddenly — five years after civilians and troops began falling ill, and only the Pentagon issued confirmation — the mainstream press is onto the story. In the *New York Times*, Philip Shenon noted that news of the exposures, "raised concerns

about the credibility of the Department of Defense."

Let Them Eat Microwaves or How Can They Live Like That?

A roof over your head? Health care? Enough to eat? A burial plot? Just what is it poor people want anyway? The conservative Competitive Enterprise Institute thinks it knows. Fed up with "defenders

of the welfare state" who whine that 14.5 percent of Americans live in poverty, CEI has decided that poverty is relative. "[F]ew consider," notes its in-house organ *CEI Update*, "that the poor in America are substantially better off than the 'middle class' in many other countries. For example ... [the] poor in the US are far more likely to own dishwashers and microwaves than people in most European countries."

Ethics for Sale or Rent

Announcing the winner of the "Tom Lehrer Nothing-Left-to-Satirize Award."

This prize is named after the satirical songwriter's expla-

man right to murder, rape, and pillage in the name of democracy. Now regularly featured at gatherings of the Christian right where he is one of their token Jews, he gained his glory in the Iran-Contra scandal when he was an assistant secretary of state for the Reagan administration. A staunch friend of the Contras and bedfellow of the murderous Salvadoran and Guatemalan death squad regimes, he was convicted of withholding information from Congress and pardoned by Bush. Which is like being slapped with a traffic ticket because you parked illegally while spraying a schoolyard with automatic weapons fire — and then getting the ticket fixed.

But that's all over now and he has acknowledged that the whole thing was "an error in judgment." Our winner of the "Nothing-Left-to-Satirize Award" was recently named president of the Ethics in Public Policy Center. Congratulations to Elliott Abrams.

Upholding Standards

Soon you won't be able to blame the FBI every time overzealous investigators compile dossiers on political suspects, snoop on opposition party rivals, pore through medical records, or leak information on hapless subjects.

The bureau has quietly "outsourced" its background checks of presidential appointees and other employment matters.

In 1995, private contractors hired under Background Investigation Contract Services [BICS] conducted over 5,000 probes. Clinton's 1997 budget requests an additional 88 people and \$4.1 million to help privatize the investigations. A March FBI report states, "When fully estab-



nation of why he was retiring: because he couldn't top the Nobel Peace Prize committee's decision to give its award to Henry Kissinger. *CAQ*'s winner this year is a famous war criminal and relentless defender of the hu-

lished, [BICS] will conduct all FBI background investigations throughout the US and Puerto Rico."

According to Charles Finnie, writing in *Legal Times*, private BICS contractors to the FBI will perform investigative fieldwork "such as interviewing past employers and roommates, delving into medical and financial records, and combing arrest reports. The material they come up with is then merged with other sources and lodged in the background files" — the same ones that are at the core of the recent White House scandal.

The private background checkers, in addition to being required to have a fax machine and a driver's license, will have their own background check. (Perhaps cost cutting can be further enhanced if they simply investigate themselves.) Meanwhile, for the last five years, the DEA has been farming out background checks through Varicon, a Virginia security company.

Although the potential for abuse is glaring, attacks on the FBI scheme almost make you want to stand up and defend the privatization. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) warned that without the bureau in charge, "you lose ... accountability. ... What if somebody makes up stories? You can't fire them." Henry Hyde (R-Ill.), also distressed, imaginatively declared, "The FBI has a certain credibility." Said ex-Attorney General William Barr, "An impressionable person might put a flimsy rumor in their report, but FBI agents are trained to put everything in context." Bureau spokesperson Michael Korten reassured critics: If BICS contractors "don't consistently meet [the same standards as bureau agents], they are let go." Now don't you feel better?

Maple Thief Rag

As bloody revolution spread through their country, 100,000 loyal citizens, fearing for life, limb, and liberty, refused to betray their government and fled to safety in the giant nation to the north. Despite the defeat of their cause, these plucky refugees never abandoned hope of regaining confiscated land and property.

Cubans hunkered down in Miami? Nope, it's those fiendish Canadians who have lulled us all these years with their deceitful image of bland friendliness. Now the mask is off.

"We had to leave," said Liberal Canadian parliamentarian John Godfrey. "Like all the Cuban-Americans, we had to get out. We are the Contras of our time." In legislation that parallels Helms-Burton, Godfrey is seeking restitution of property stolen during the American Revolution. His law would also impose penalties on US holdings of businesses that once belonged to Loyalists and would revoke Canadian visas for Americans connected with those businesses. In addition to the return of his ancestral land in Virginia, Godfrey expects a big chunk of the eastern seaboard to revert to the Loyalists.

"[W]e're talking billions of dollars in places like Manhattan and Philadelphia."

Those US critics charging that the Canadian bill is ludicrous were hard pressed to distinguish it from Helms-Burton, which Clinton — groveling shame-

lessly for South Florida votes and campaign contributions — recently signed. After its passage, the State Department banned nine Canadian executives from entering the US. Their Canadian companies had invested in Cuban property supposedly confiscated from Americans after Castro came to power.

Clearly, it's time the US started worrying more about its other border — the longest unprotected boundary in the world. One vigilant Republican legislator from Miami has proposed striking back by kidnapping Canadian executives

who "collaborated with Castro" and putting them on trial.

"Castro's days ... are numbered," said Lincoln Diaz-Balart in July. Agents of "a free Cuba" (presumably himself and his *gusano* buddies), "will enforce the laws of Cuba — even extra-territorially — grabbing a few investors to bring to trial à la Eichmann." Diaz-

Balart was referring to the Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann who was kidnapped by Israeli agents, tried and hanged in 1962. According to an aide, though, Diaz-Balart did not mean to equate Canadian CEOs with Nazi killers.

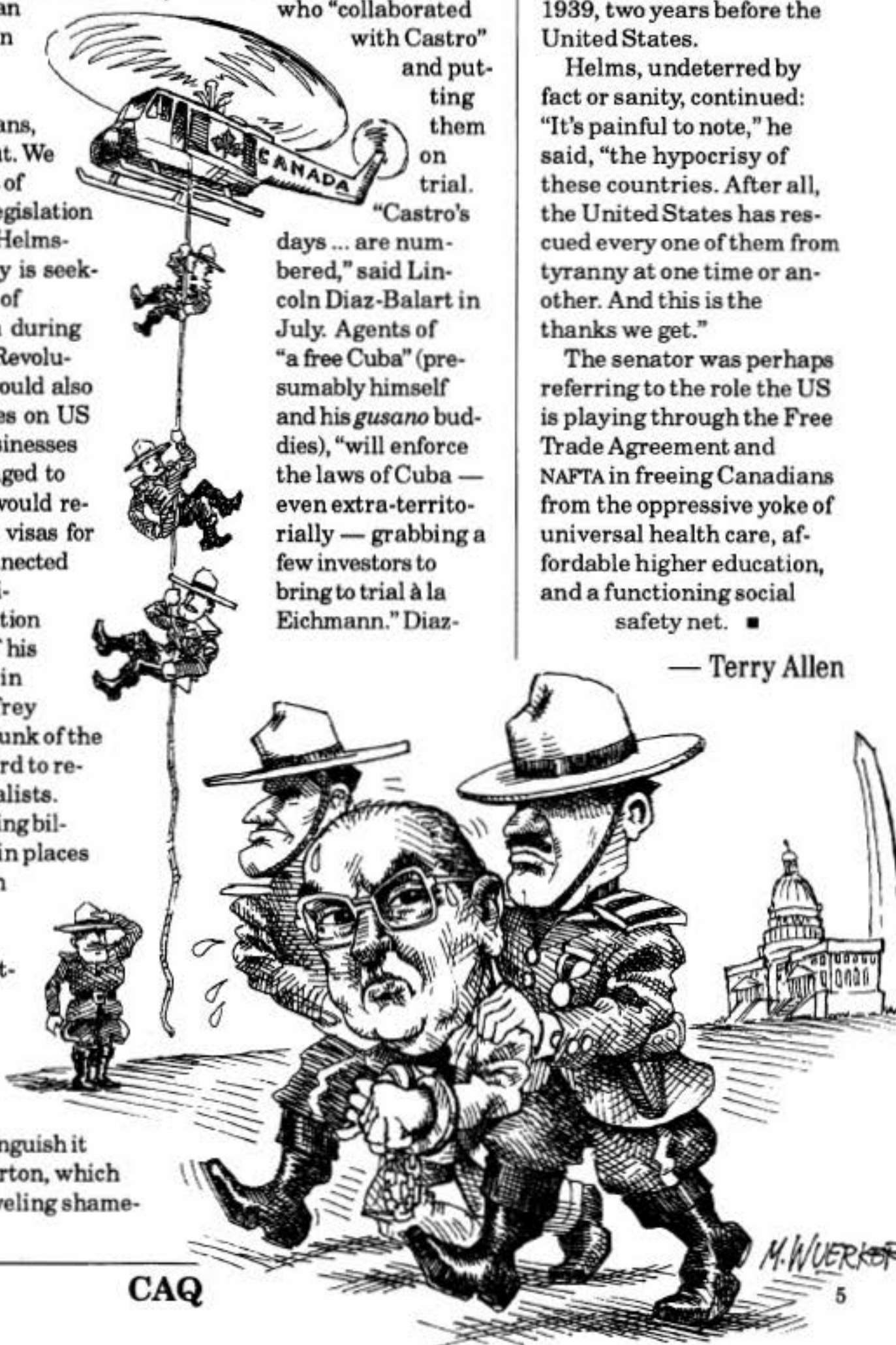
Jesse Helms, co-author of the US model for the Canadian bill also favored Nazi analogies. He likened Ottawa's stance toward Cuba to Neville Chamberlain's appeasement of Hitler.

Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien responded that Canada had entered the war against Hitler in 1939, two years before the United States.

Helms, undeterred by fact or sanity, continued: "It's painful to note," he said, "the hypocrisy of these countries. After all, the United States has rescued every one of them from tyranny at one time or another. And this is the thanks we get."

The senator was perhaps referring to the role the US is playing through the Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA in freeing Canadians from the oppressive yoke of universal health care, affordable higher education, and a functioning social safety net. ■

— Terry Allen



The Burmese Gulag

For 34 years the people of Burma have been ruled by a military junta as tyrannical and secretive as any in the modern era. Now, desperate for hard currency, the country's dictators are at pains to establish Burma as a vacation paradise. Posing as a travel consultant, John Pilger penetrated beyond this new tourist trail to uncover a nightmare world of intimidation, forced displacement, and slavery.



Guarded prisoners forced to build the road by the Mandalay Palace.

by John Pilger

At dawn, in Burma's ancient capital of Pagan, crows glide without a quiver among the silhouettes of temples that rise like cathedrals in the desert. In Ananda, the most celebrated temple, there are four colossal standing Buddhas. As the light catches one of them, it is smiling. As you get closer the smile becomes enigmatic, then it fades. As you walk to one side and look back, the Buddha's expression is melancholy. Walk on and it becomes fear veiled in pride. I have not seen anything quite like it. For the devout, no doubt, it symbolizes Buddha's timeless wisdom. For me it is the face of modern Burma.

John Pilger is an internationally known journalist and filmmaker. He has twice won Britain's highest award for journalism, as well as documentary academy awards in the US and UK. This article is a substantially updated version of one that originally appeared in *The Guardian* (London). ©John Pilger.

Six years ago, more than 4,000 people lived in Pagan, a city which stands alone of the last wonders of the ancient world. They were given two weeks to leave, some only a few days. The city was being opened to mass tourism, and only guides and the staff of a planned strip of hotels were permitted to stay. The people's homes were bulldozed and they were marched at gunpoint to a shadeless, waterless stubble that is a dust bowl in the dry season and runs with mud during the monsoon. Their new houses are of straw and poor-quality bamboo and stand mostly out of sight of the tour buses that come down the new and empty dual carriageway. Those villagers who objected were sent out onto the barren plain, or beaten, or taken away in the night.

The dispossession was mild by the standards of the dictator Ne Win and the

generals who have ruled Burma since a military coup in 1962 crushed the democratically elected government. Last year the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions reported that in Rangoon alone, a million people had been forced from their homes in preparation for tourism and foreign investment. Throughout Burma perhaps three million people have been brutally swept up and exiled to "satellite zones" where they are compelled to serve Burma's new facade of "economic growth."

Arriving in Rangoon on a Sunday afternoon, there is a veneer of normality. Frangipani blossoms perfume the air and incense fills the covered bridges that lead to the stupas surrounding the great golden pagoda of Shwedagon. Families seek the intonation of a passing monk, though there is a furtiveness about them all.

Rowers glide on Inya Lake; behind them, work on high-rise tourist hotels proceeds at a frenzied pace. There are surreal touches. A billboard advertising Lucky Strike cigarettes has "Welcome to Yangon" in the space otherwise allotted to a cancer warning. "Yangon" is the name the military regime has given Rangoon; Burma is "Myanmar," which is the equivalent of the German government insisting that the rest of the world call their country Deutschland. A billboard near the airport announces "Visit Myanmar Year 1996" beneath a cartoon picture of a Burmese Betty Boop. On the next street is the headquarters of Military Intelligence, known to the Burmese as "Em-eye." It is Burma's KGB and, alongside the old tyrant Ne Win and the army, it is the power in the land and the source of what the United Nations special rapporteur has described as "an atmosphere of pervasive fear."¹

For arriving foreign tourists and businesspeople, the drive to their hotel inevitably includes a short detour along University Avenue. To the uninitiated, this has a frisson of the forbidden and seditious. Number 54 is the home of the 1991 Nobel Peace Prize winner and leader of the Burmese democracy movement, Aung San Suu Kyi. Here, until her release last July, she spent six years under house arrest. At this time, every Saturday and Sunday, she was allowed to speak from over her garden gate to several thousand supporters corralled behind barbed wire barriers. This was not so much a concession by the regime as a showcase for the new "openness" of "Visit Myanmar 1996." A busload of Taiwanese tourists was just ahead of me, snapping pictures through the tinted glass. What struck me was the extraordinary courage of the Burmese who came to listen to her — in doing so they branded themselves as opponents of the regime — and the Kafka-like absurdity of the country's elected leader

1. Report by the UN Commission on Human Rights, cited in *The Independent* (London), Sept. 10, 1995.



Aung San Suu Kyi's supporters brave the military dictatorship to hear her weekly message.

having to address people while on a platform behind her garden fence.

Since her "unconditional" release, Suu Kyi has been denied freedom of movement. On a recent attempt to leave Rangoon, she boarded a train to Mandalay only to find her carriage adrift at the station as the train pulled out. She cannot freely associate with anyone. Those Burmese who pass through her gate take a risk: Their names are noted and they can expect a call in the night. Shortly before I interviewed her, eight members of a dance troupe who had celebrated Independence Day with her "disappeared." They include the popular comedians U Pa Pa Lay and Lu Zaw, who are said to have made a joke about the generals.

"What shall we do?" he asks. His friend replies, "Keep on filming until they shoot us."

Each has since been sentenced to seven years' hard labor. Since May, the regime has detained several hundred members of Suu Kyi's party, the National League for Democracy, and has banned her "garden gate" meeting (a prohibition she has so far successfully ignored).

Aung San Suu Kyi lived in Britain for many years before she returned to

Burma, and her family lives there still. Her husband, the British Tibetologist Michael Aris, has once again been refused permission to visit her. This also applies to their two sons, whose Burmese nationality was long ago canceled. The official newspaper, the *New Light Of Myanmar*, attacks her regularly and with mounting viciousness. She is "obsessed by lust and superstition"; she "swings around a bamboo pole brushed with cess"; she is "drowning in conceit" and "it is pitiable and at once disgusting to see a person [like her] suffering from insanity ... now at a demented stage." Aung San Suu Kyi dismisses all this with a laugh that is brave, though difficult to share.

Of course, the reason for such intimidation is her popularity, which could not be greater. At the mention of her name, the contrived neutrality of faces, by which people survive, breaks into smiles. People whisper her name as you brush them in a market, then turn and put a finger to their lips. And if you are able to speak and disclose that you have been to see her, all caution is discarded and questions about her well-being pour forth. But along with expressions of admiration, affection, and solidarity are fears for her safety and the recognition that she, and the democracy movement, may be trapped. "She is a Mandela



Aung San Suu Kyi with portrait of her father.

without a De Klerk," a close friend of hers told me. "Unless pressure comes from the very governments that the regime is now courting in Asia and the West, nothing will change for a long time." Aung San Suu Kyi herself told me that foreign investment and tourism were shoring up the power of the junta, and that the world must realize the scale of Burma's human rights abuses, particularly forced labor. "News comes and goes like fashion," she said. "After the people rose up in 1988 and paid the price in bloodshed, we slipped from the headlines. It will be a pity if we slip again."

In February, the UN Commission on Human Rights reported, as it does every year, that the following violations were commonplace in Burma: "Torture; summary and arbitrary executions, forced labor, abuse of women, politically motivated arrests and detention, forced displacement, important restrictions on the freedoms of expression and association and oppression of ethnic and religious minorities. ..." ² Take at random any of the reports by Amnesty International and what distinguishes the Bur-

mese junta from other modern tyrannies is slave labor. "Conditions in the labor camps," reports one study, "are so harsh that hundreds of prisoners have died as a result. ... Military Intelligence personnel regularly interrogate prisoners to the point of unconsciousness. Even the possession of almost any reading material is punishable. Elderly, sick, and even handicapped people are placed in leg-irons and forced to work."³

In Britain, tourism to Burma, a former British colony and repository of much imperial nostalgia, has become a lucrative business. Pick up a travel brochure these days from any of the famous names in British tourism — British Airways, Orient Express, Kuoni — and there is no problem. Indeed, to British Airways, Burma offers "the ultimate in luxury" and a "fabulous prize" for its Executive Club members. "To find an unspoiled country today may seem impossible," extols the Orient Express brochure, "but Burma is such a

3. Amnesty International, *Myanmar: Conditions in prisons and labor camps*, AI Index: ASA 16/22/95, Sept. 22, 1995.

place. It has retained its charm, its fascinating traditions ... its easy-going ways are a tonic to the Western traveler." Moreover, this "truly unique experience" includes a "free lecture on Burma's history and culture." I inquired about this lecture. It makes no mention of the momentous events of 1988.

Destroying Democracy

In 1988, the year before the democracy movement in China was destroyed so publicly in Tiananmen Square, the people of Burma rose up, and as many as 10,000 were killed by the army. Unlike the Chinese leadership, the generals in Rangoon moved quickly to curtail foreign media coverage. Although eyewitnesses reported the massacre, there were no professional TV cameras and no satellite images to shock the world. Troops had orders to shoot on sight anyone with a camera. On one tape smuggled out of Rangoon, the voices of two amateur Burmese cameramen are caught at the moment they were spotted by soldiers. "What shall we do?" asks one of them. His friend replies, "Keep on filming until they shoot us."

In April 1988, Suu Kyi returned from England where she had settled with her husband and two children to take care of her dying mother. Her father was Aung San, the revered national hero whose guerrillas were trained by the Japanese, but then turned against them during the occupation of World War II. Having helped to lay the foundations of a democratic state, and negotiated independence from Britain, he was assassinated in 1947. More than 40 years later, his daughter agreed to take on leader-

From out of jungle so dense that its bamboo and foliage formed great wickerwork screens, they were carving the railway.

ship of a renewed democracy movement; and it was her explicit demand for "the restoration of democracy" that led to her house arrest in 1989.

However, the generals did hold elections. Having banned canvassing, threatened the electorate, and disbarred and silenced Aung San Suu Kyi, they were

2. UN Economic and Social Report, Commission on Human Rights, E/CN. 4/1994/57, Feb. 16, 1994.

confident they had fragmented the National League for Democracy (NLD), and that their own front would gain the largest bloc of seats. It was a miscalculation "of historic proportion and unfathomable stupidity," said a former British diplomat based in Rangoon. The NLD won 82 percent of seats in the new parliament. Stunned, the junta responded by arresting 3,000 NLD workers and handing out prison sentences of up to 25 years to those of the newly elected parliamentarians who tried to establish the government.

The euphemism for oppression was the now familiar "economic stability." Having re-invented themselves as the State Law and Order Council, which goes by the fine Orwellian acronym, SLORC, the generals declared Burma "open to free enterprise." At the same time, in order to rebuild the crumbling infrastructure — roads, bridges, airports, railways — they set about turning the country into a vast labor camp. Last year, the moat around the imperial palace in Mandalay was excavated and restored almost entirely by forced labor, including chain gangs guarded by troops. When photographic evidence of this practice was produced, the regime claimed that "contributing labor" was "a noble Burmese tradition" and, anyway, many of the workers were convicted criminals who had "volunteered to work in the open air."⁴ In totalitarian Burma the term "convicted criminal" can embrace someone guilty of having been elected to office or of handing out leaflets calling for democracy (five years' hard labor), or of singing a song the generals don't like (seven years' hard labor).

There is a terrible irony in the building of the railway. During World War II, some 100,000 Burmese and other Asians died alongside 16,000 British and Allied soldier-slaves on the Japanese "death railway" that linked Burma with Thailand. Outside the gates of the Commonwealth war cemetery at Thanbyuzayat in the south of Burma, the death railway is still there. The same rusted lines rest on the same sleepers: A life was lost for every sleeper laid, one survivor calculated. A Japanese locomotive stands as it was abandoned on the day the horror ended. It is jet black and on the track in front of it is a square of barbed wire enclosing three figures rendered in cement — a Japanese guard

with a rifle and two emaciated, shaven-headed POWs working with pick axes.

Now, history is repeating itself. An extension of this line is being built in Mon State, between Ye and Tavoy on the Andaman Sea. This is Burma's great secret. Although human rights organizations have documented the testimonies of the slave workers on the new death railway, few outsiders have seen it and the slave camps along the route. This is because much of Mon State is closed to foreigners. It is Burma's gulag.

are dungeon-like, with iron bars and damp trickling over torn posters of coy women holding parasols.

People considered us with due curiosity; a whole generation here has seldom laid eyes on Europeans. To talk openly to foreigners is to beckon interrogation and worse. Hotels must copy guest registration forms to as many as 14 different authorities. On the day we arrived in Tavoy all "independent travelers" were told they had to leave. Fortunately, all the roads out were closed,



DAVID MUNRO

Using slave labor, SLORC's new death railway carries on the traditions of the World War II line in which a life was lost for every sleeper laid.

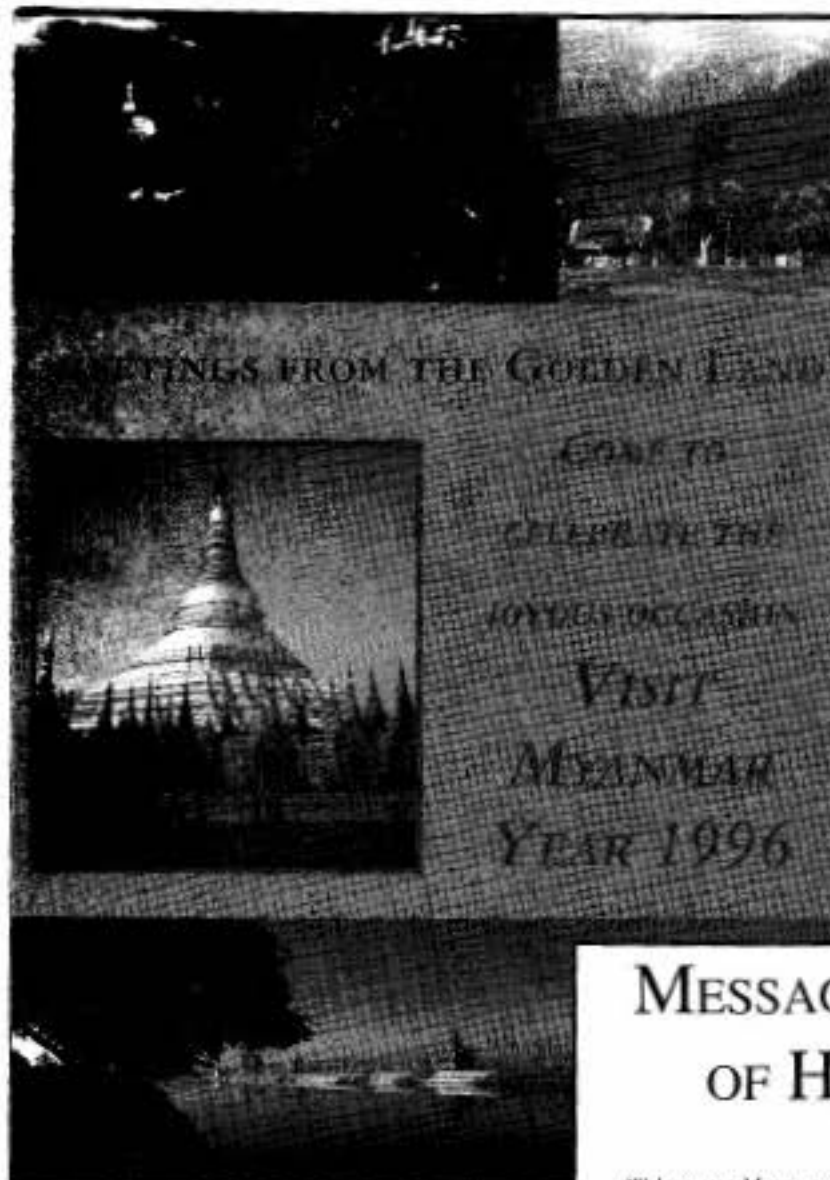
Slaves of SLORC

In making a film for British television, my film-making partner David Munro and I entered the country under the subterfuge of travel consultants. We headed south, leaving Rangoon well before dawn, traveling over spine-gutting roads, often without headlights. We passed watchtowers and groups of prisoners in chains, quarrying rock. Those guards at roadblocks were junior, asleep, or uninterested; money fluttered across to them.

The towns in this remote part of the country are a step back in time, as if the British Raj were temporarily away at the hill stations. Ancient sewing machines whirled on balconies; the roads were filled with bicycles, not cars; carbon paper, radiograms, and sleeveless sweaters were for sale. Tavoy has streets of decorous teak houses, the biggest with lace iron balconies. Others

and the ancient Dutch-manufactured Fokker aircraft of Myanmar Airways had been commandeered by a general. We calculated that we had about a day and a night to find the railway before we were caught. Following the line of embankments north into the jungle, we succeeded in getting lost, then by chance came upon a clearing that presented what might have been a tableau of Victorian England. Scores of people were building embankments and a bridge across a dry river bed that is now, with the arrival of the monsoon, an ochre-colored torrent. From out of jungle so dense that its bamboo and foliage formed great wickerwork screens, they were carving the railway. A 20-foot-high embankment had been built with earth dug by hoe and hand from huge holes. The skilled were paid about \$.50 a day. The majority were slave laborers, of whom many were children. Laboriously

4. Interview with Dr. Naw Angelene, director of tourism, government of Myanmar, Feb. 2, 1996.



LETTERS FROM THE GOLDEN LAND
COME TO
CELEBRATE THE
JOYOUS OCCASION
VISIT
MYANMAR
YEAR 1996

Every village along the way must give its labor "voluntarily," regardless of age or the state of people's health. Advanced pregnancy is no excuse. If people protest that, as peasant farmers, their labor is all they have to keep them and their families alive, they are fined and their possessions confiscated. If a whole village objects, the head man is beaten or killed and all the houses razed.

"I saw one old man accidentally drop his load into the river," a former civil servant told me in a nearby safe area controlled by the Karen National Union. "As he tried to retrieve it, the soldiers shot him in the head. I could see the water turn red with his blood, then

"We were told nothing," she said. "We overheard we were building a railway so that a French oil company could run a pipeline through, and foreigners came to look over the site." The oil company is a partnership between a US company, Unocal, and Total, which is part-owned by the French government. They are building a \$1 billion pipeline that will carry Burma's natural gas into Thailand. The deal will give the Rangoon generals about \$400 million a year over 30 years. Since they put an end to democracy in 1990, it is estimated that SLORC has received 65 percent of its financial backing from foreign oil companies, including Britain's Premier Oil and America's Texaco and ARCO.

In its 1993 report on human rights abuses throughout the world, the US State Department says SLORC "routinely" uses slave labor and "will use the new railway to transport soldiers and construction supplies into the pipeline area." Unocal says reports of slave labor are a "fabrication" and both the oil companies deny the railway is linked to the pipeline project. But more than 5,000 troops have already been shipped to the pipeline area and army patrols protect Total personnel.

Although taken aback by the sudden arrival of two Europeans on the embankments, the chief engineer admitted to me that the railway was being built mainly with "volunteers." He said that the children made bricks for the army, which sold them to the construction company. As we talked, soldiers guarding the "volunteers" began to emerge from their tent. We left expeditiously.

Helping Hands

Western entrepreneurs in Burma claim that foreign investment has multiplied tenfold since 1992. "It's not so much a gradual pick up," said Pat James, a Texas businessman, "as a skyrocket." This claim is disputed by, among others, a recent report in *The Economist*. The World Bank and IMF have yet to lend the generals a penny. However, what has begun in Burma is a familiar process in which a dictatorship's crimes against its people are obscured and "forgotten" as foreign businesspeople seek to justify what the East Asian governments and the US call "positive engagement" and the Europeans and Australians call "critical dialogue." The prize is a cheap labor colony that promises to undercut even China and Vietnam.

MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTRY OF HOTELS AND TOURISM

Welcome to Myanmar, 'The Golden Land'

As Visit Myanmar Year 1996 fast approaches, we would like to take this opportunity to extend our warmest welcome to each and every visitor, from near and far, to our beautiful country - the Land of a 'Million Pagodas,' of colourful bazaars and ancient religious festivals.

Come and experience our enchanting capital of Yangon, the noble temples of Bagan, magical charm of Mandalay, the serenity of Inle Lake, the thousands of carved Buddha images of the Pindaya Caves, the scenic splendour of our snowcapped mountains, the unspoiled beaches at Ngapali, and above all, the serenity and warmth of our people - all these await visitors to the Union of Myanmar.

The State Law and Order Restoration Council has embarked on the ambitious campaign of building a new, modern and fully-developed nation through the implementation of its political, economic and social objectives. Within the framework of these objectives, The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, in collaboration with other related Ministries, is extending its full efforts to promote Myanmar as a world-class, international tourist destination.

For example, long known as an agricultural giant, Myanmar is presently developing other sectors of its new market-orientated economy. This can most clearly be seen in the proliferation of tourist and business-class accommodations presently under construction throughout the country. From five-star, super luxurious city hotels, to smaller and quaint inns and country guest houses, these joint-venture projects being developed by local and foreign investors bear witness to the economic transformation presently under way here. The Ministry of Hotels and Tourism has thus been in the forefront of national efforts to develop the private sector and bring improvement to the nation's infrastructure.

International tourists and businessmen from all over the world are visiting Myanmar in ever increasing numbers. And although Visit Myanmar Year 1996 officially begins October 1, 1996 and extends for one year, it is really only the beginning of what promises to be an exciting and opportunity-filled decade for tourists and developers alike. Visit Myanmar Year 1996 will be one of the first steps in our effort to bring renewed success and prosperity to The Union, to reshape our national economy, to reinvigorate our sense of national pride, and at the same time to preserve and safeguard our priceless cultural heritage and national character.

With this message, may we once again, with open arms, welcome all of you to visit The Union of Myanmar and discover for yourself the unique beauty of our land, and the happiness and serenity of our people, all of whom still strive to preserve the rich and unique culture of their ancient past.

and clumsily the child workers wrested clay from the excavations, sharing a hoe among three. One little girl in a long blue dress struggled to wield a hoe taller than herself, then fell back exhausted and with a wince, held her shoulder.

The children carried heavy loads of mud mixed with straw in baskets and dishes on their heads and clearly agonized under the weight. They poured them into a vat and grinder, turned by two tethered oxen. The sticky clay, now almost as hard as rock, was gathered by two children, one of them small enough to fit up to his shoulders in a hole directly beneath the grinder. Horrified, I watched a load of clay, like fresh cement, tip over him, almost burying him. I reached under his arms and pulled him out. The others laughed, as if this was normal. How many children are trapped and injured and die like that? As many as 300 adults and children have been killed or have died from disease and exhaustion, according to one estimate. There were at least 20 other bridges in the vicinity and children were working on all of them.

the river carried him away." A man who escaped with his wife told me: "I saw people dying because of landslides or fever. Some of the bodies were never found, only the head or a foot. They didn't bother to bury the bodies properly, with a funeral. They just dug a hole and left them there." His wife, Min, said, "I feel for the children. They are too young to anticipate danger, so they are vulnerable. They are the ones who die first." I asked her if she knew why she was being forced to work in this way.

Most Western governments, together with Japan, are running a "two track policy" on Burma: offering public support for Aung San Suu Kyi while pursuing, often in secret, long-term business links with SLORC. Tax havens, such as the British Virgin Islands, are used to move money to Burma; this is the route used by Unocal, the US oil company.⁵

In spite of criticism by the Clinton administration and Secretary of State Warren Christopher's recent description of a "new tide of repression in Burma," US policy is business as usual: "not to encourage or discourage trade." After visiting Rangoon in June and "confering" with SLORC, President Clinton's special envoy, William Brown, praised the role of ASEAN, the Association of South East Asian Nations, which has since offered SLORC full membership. Calling ASEAN "that noble organization," Brown reaffirmed US policy as "constructive engagement" with Burma.⁶ (This was the term used by the Reagan administration for US support of the apartheid regime in South Africa).

Brown also said that "the issue of forced labor has diminished" — in the week that the International Labor Organization reported that SLORC was forcing its people into forced labor "on a massive scale and under the cruellest of conditions." In a letter to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, a State Department official, John Shattuck, sought to

The prize is a cheap labor colony that promises to undercut even China and Vietnam; the price is slavery.

play down Brown's remarks. "While there are undoubtedly fluctuations in the use of forced and compulsory labor within Burma," he wrote, "the fact re-



One of the many children forced to work at hard labor by the government.

mains that such serious violations of internationally recognized worker rights are widespread and remain a matter of grave concern to the United States."⁷

The "two-track" policy is exemplified by the role of Britain. While Nelson Mandela was in London last July, feted by a British establishment that once did everything in its power to undercut him, his fellow Nobel Peace Laureate, Aung San Suu Kyi — "Asia's Mandela" — was being quietly abandoned, with the British now undercutting her.

On June 12, a day Suu Kyi appealed to the world not to do business with SLORC, a senior official of Britain's Department of Trade and Industry arrived in Rangoon to "evaluate the commercial prospects" of British support for the regime.

Mike Cohen, head of export sales to Asia, met an official of the SLORC's investment agency in the week the junta decreed a 20-year prison sentence for anyone attending meetings outside Suu Kyi's home. On the day Cohen flew into Rangoon, Jeremy Hanley, the British For-

eign Office minister, told Parliament that the British Government supported "democratic reform and human rights" in Burma. "We have made it clear to SLORC," he said, "that the resumption of normal relations is conditional on progress in those key areas. He added that the Department of Trade had "pulled the plug" on future British trade missions to Rangoon.⁸

What the minister neglected to say was that, even as he rose to address Parliament, Cohen was flying into Rangoon to "evaluate" the next trade mission. In fact, the British government has funded two recent trade missions to Burma and an international seminar in London called, "An introduction to Burma — the latest Tiger Cub," at which speakers described "the real visionaries" in SLORC.⁹

For all the European Union's pretensions on human rights, European companies, backed by their governments, are among SLORC's biggest underwriters. The Total oil company, building the oil and gas pipeline for the regime, is part-owned by the French Government. Germany is SLORC's longtime supplier of weapons-

5. Unocal, 1996.

6. Transcript of press conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand by presidential envoys William Brown and Stanley Roth, June 16, 1995.

7. Press conference at the Foreign Correspondents Club of Thailand by presidential envoys, William Brown and Stanley Roth, June 16, 1995.

8. *Hansard* (report of British parliamentary proceedings), June 12, 1996.

9. Transcript of Conference, London, November 1995.



YOICHI MATSUMOTO/IMPACT VISUALS

A Karen child, one of thousands who have fled SLORC repression, studies in the morning light at a refugee camp.

grade machine tools. On July 15, a meeting of European foreign ministers in Brussels formally blocked a call by the European Parliament for sanctions against Burma. At the same time, the EU Council of Ministers "welcomed" Burma's membership of ASEAN's Regional Forum.

So it is with Japan, another of SLORC's major underwriters. Although Japanese foreign minister Ikeda Yukihiko is said to have privately criticized SLORC, Tokyo continues to hand the junta \$48.7 million in "aid." The great zaibatsu, Mitsui, Mitsubishi, Honda, and Nippon Steel are in Rangoon. NHK, the Japanese national broadcaster, has issued a remarkable directive that the video footage it owns showing the Burmese army shooting down demonstrators "is prohibited for use by anybody in the world, even by NHK in Japan, because it's too delicate and might threaten Myanmar's (Burma's) stability. ... Please erase the material in your library."

And so it is with Australia. On July 22, Foreign Affairs Minister Alexander Downer was reported in the Australian press to have taken "a tough line" on human rights abuses in Burma. He immediately contradicted this by declaring that Australia "would not stand in the way of Burmese membership of the ASEAN

Regional Forum." In the last year, the number of Australian business delegations visiting Rangoon has doubled. The largest fence in Burma, advertising the Australian beer, Foster's, shields an army watchtower from the gaze of tourists.

By far Burma's biggest backer is China, which has armed SLORC on a barter system that has seen many of Burma's natural riches, such as its gemstones and teak, go to China. Chinese business interests are now so well ensconced that Mandalay is often referred to as "a Chinese city." Leading the "tiger" investors is Singapore, whose state arms company came to SLORC's rescue in 1988 at the height of the pro-democracy demonstrations when troops were running out of ammunition.

The collaboration of Thailand has been critical to SLORC's survival. The Thai Petroleum Authority will be the sole importer and consumer of the gas that comes through the French/US-built pipeline. The deal is little different from the logging, mining, and fishing concessions which Thai interests have negotiated with Rangoon since "development" in their own country has all but destroyed its principal natural resources.

Part of the unstated deal is that the Thai military sends back Burmese refugees who manage to cross the border. In

April 1993, Thai troops burned down two refugee camps in an operation, reported the *Bangkok Nation*, "probably related to the gas pipeline." Thousands of ethnic Mon refugees have since been forced back into Burma, many straight into the hands of the SLORC military. On the border, where the pipeline will enter Thailand, SLORC troops display pens distributed by the French oil company, Total, in their uniform pockets. "Total is coming," said one of them with a broad smile.

Burma's most profitable export is illegal. More than half the heroin reaching the streets of US and Australian cities originates in the "golden triangle" where the borders of Burma, Laos, and Thailand meet. Under SLORC, heroin production has doubled. In a study, *Out of Control*, two researchers, Dr. Chris Beyrer and Faith Doherty, conclude from a long investigation for the Southeast Asian Information Network that SLORC has allowed heroin to circulate freely and cheaply in Burma in the hope that it "pacifies" the rebellious young.¹⁰ According to his son, the infamous drug lord Kuhn Sa is living comfortably on Inya Lake in the center of Rangoon with the support of military intelligence.

10. Chris Beyrer and Faith Doherty, *Out of Control*, Southeast Asian Information Network, Bangkok, Winter 1996.

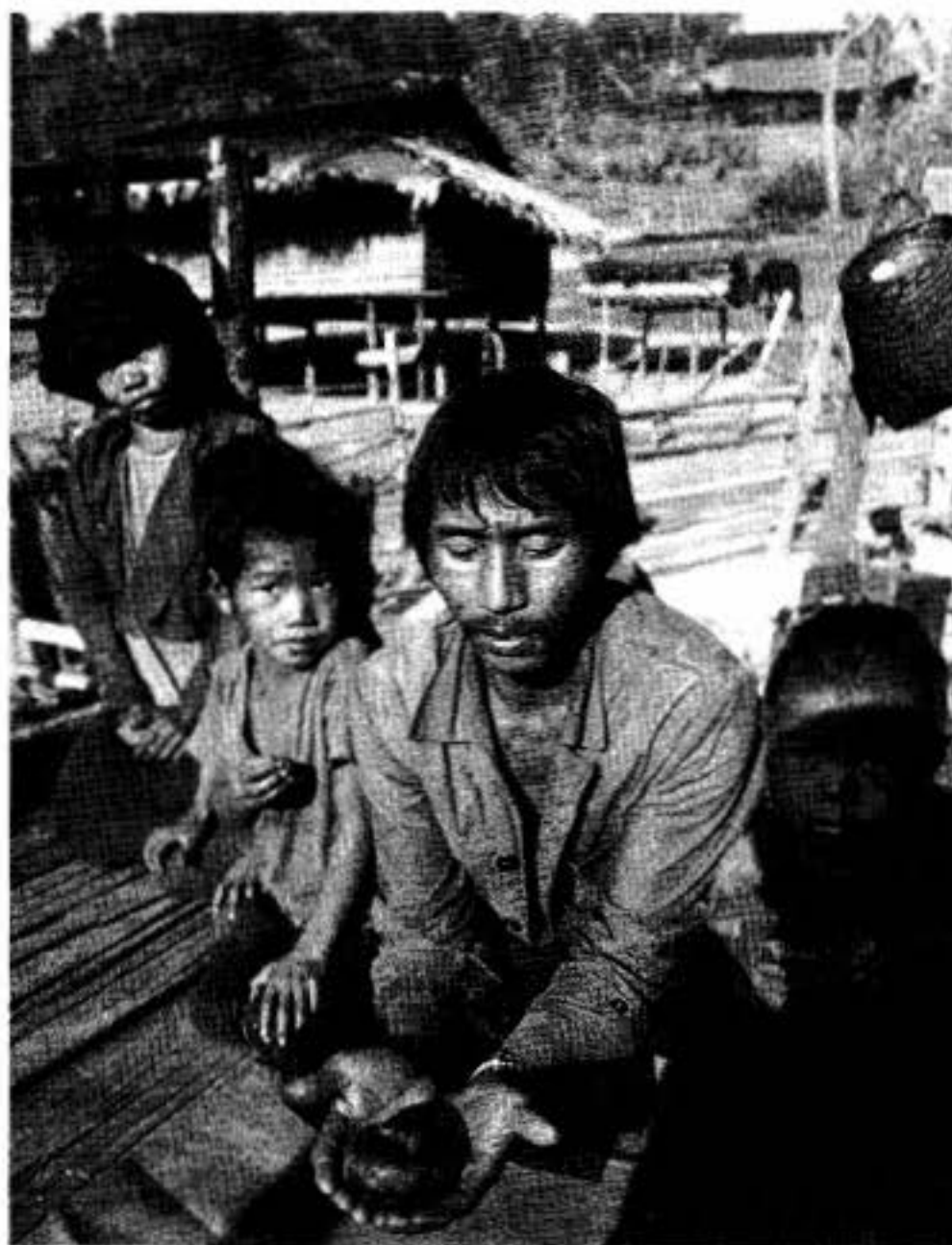
While drugs bring in quick cash, it is tourism on which SLORC pins its hopes for foreign exchange and, above all, international respectability. "At last the doors to Myanmar, the magic golden land, are open," waxes Dr. Naw Angelene, the director of tourism, in an official hand-out. "Roads will be wider, lights will be brighter, tours will be cleaner, grass will be greener, and with more job opportunities, people will be happier."¹¹ One of the biggest foreign tour operators in Burma is the Orient Express Group, which operates "The Road To Mandalay," a "champagne-style cruise" between Mandalay and Pagan in a converted Rhine cruiser. The cabins, says the brochure, "are not simply luxurious"; there is a Kipling Bar and a swimming pool.

When I found it at anchor in the heat and mosquitoes, *The Road To Mandalay* looked squat and sturdy rather than luxurious. Once on board, however, it seemed the perfect vehicle for pampering tourists in one of the world's 10 poorest countries. Like an air-conditioned bubble, it is constantly cleansed of the smells and noise and dust of the land through which it glides. In the "staterooms" the television rises at the foot of the bed and, presto, there is Rupert Murdoch's satellite TV. In February, the captain of *The Road To Mandalay* welcomed his inaugural guests. "They might have been, the cast from an Edwardian novel" wrote London *Times* travel writer Peter Hughes, "a prince and two princesses from the Endsleigh League of European Royalty, our own Princess Michael of Kent among them; a duke; a marche and marchese; a film star, Helena Bonham-Carter; and assorted lords and ladies whose names tended to be the same as their addresses. Those without titles merely had money." The actual road to Mandalay has recently been converted into an expressway for tourists. For the local people forced to work on it, it is known as "the road of no return." According to Amnesty Interna-

11. Nicholas Greenwood, *Guide to Burma* (England: Bradt Publications, 1993), p. xii.

tional, two workers who tried to escape were executed on the spot by soldiers. Another eight were beaten until they were severely injured; one was hacked to death with a hoe.

When I interviewed James Sherwood, the American chair of Sea Containers, which runs the Road to Mandalay tours, he described the Burmese generals as "rather bright, well educated, dedicated men who are trying to improve the country." He said he had contacted the CIA about the "allegations" of human rights violations and



A major source of capital for SLORC is opium, like this grown by a Pa-O hill tribe family in Eastern Burma.

it was "confirmed to me these allegations were untrue."

Aung San Suu Kyi was two years old when her father was murdered. What distinguished the movement he founded was its complex attempt to apply a blend of Buddhism, socialism, and democracy to the freely elected governments that followed. The ideas of Nehru, Sun Yat Sen, Manzini, and Voltaire were adapted. Marx was virtually reinvented as a disciple of Buddha. But this flowering coincided with a period of turmoil as the ethnic peoples de-

manded autonomy. In March 1962, the army stepped in and seized power. Its leader, Ne Win, became Burma's Stalin. He displaced whole populations, built labor camps, and filled the prisons with his enemies, real and imagined. His wars against the ethnic peoples were unrelenting and vengeful. He abolished Burma's lively free press; and along the way he made himself extremely rich. In 1984, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* reported that the privately chartered jet taking him to a Swiss health clinic "was delayed because chests of jade and

precious stones carried on board had been stacked incorrectly and had to be reloaded." Three years later Burma ignominiously applied for Least Developed Country status so that it could qualify for relief on its massive foreign debt.

In 1987, the leader who dubbed himself "Brilliant as the Sun" produced his coup de grace. Without warning, he withdrew most of the country's banknotes, replacing them with new denominations that included or added up to the number nine. According to his chief astrologer, nine was Ne Win's lucky number. The people of Burma did not share his luck. As most of them kept their savings in cash, most were ruined.

In a nation now so impoverished, the fuse was lit. By March 1988, the regime was at war with the students at Rangoon University. The moment of uprising came precisely at eight minutes past eight on the morning of the eighth month of 1988. This was the auspicious time the dock workers, the "first wave," chose to strike. Other

workers followed in succession; and in subsequent days and weeks almost everyone in the cities and towns, it seemed, showed a courage equal to those who stormed the Berlin Wall the following year. Without guns, ordinary people began to reclaim their country.

Then the slaughter began. The army fired point blank at the crowds and bayoneted those who fell. In Thailand and Norway, I have interviewed the exiled witnesses to these epic events, most of them speaking publicly for the first time. "One of my friends

JONATHAN KAPLAN/IMPACT VISUALS

was shot in the head right there, in front of me," said Ko Htun Oo, a former student. "Two girls and a monk were shot next to him." Another student, Aye Chan, said, "A lot of flame was coming out of the crematorium which was surrounded by troops. They weren't even identifying bodies, so the parents would never know. The dead and wounded were all mixed up. They just burned them alive." Another spoke of hearing a wounded schoolboy cry out for his mother as he was buried alive in the cemetery: "The caretaker didn't want to do it," he said, "but the soldiers had guns pointed at him."

Now well into his 80s, Ne Win remains the center of SLORC's power. His former aide, the secret police chief, Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt, is "Secretary One." Behind sunglasses, Khin Nyunt's pudgy face appears at least five times in every copy of the official daily. His seminal work goes under the catchy title, "The Conspiracy Of Treasonous Minions Within The Myanmar Naing-Ngan And Traitorous Cohorts Abroad." One wonders how many of the gallery of faces in its pages are dead. Pol Pot and his gang turned out similar tracts. "Secretary One" is the man whose job is silencing "heretics": those like the lawyer Nay Min serving 14 years for "spreading rumors" to the BBC, and the UNICEF researcher Khin Zaw Win serving 15 years for sending "fabricated news" to the UN, and the writer San San Nwe sentenced to 10 years for "spreading false information injurious to the state." Last year the general subjected a US senator, John McCain (R-Ariz.), to an hour-long harangue about how SLORC was holding back the "red tide," then played him a videotape showing "communists" beheading villagers with machetes: footage so sickening that McCain's wife had to leave the room. The aim was to convince the senator that Aung San Suu Kyi was a front for "red subversives."

Democratic Legacy

The taxi dropped us far from the long green fence of number 54 University Avenue. Our cameras were concealed in shoulder bags; a figure in sunglasses stood up to watch us. We peered through a hole in the corrugated iron gate and a face asked our names. Inside, another sunglasses told us to write down our names and occupations. We then crossed an imaginary line into friendly territory and were greeted

warmly by Suu Kyi's assistant, U Win Htein, who was arrested with her and spent six years in prison, mostly in solitary confinement. He led us into the house, a stately pile fallen on hard times, overlooking a garden that tumbles down to Inya Lake and bordered by a fence equipped with alarms, a reminder that this was one woman's prison.

Aung San Suu Kyi wore silk and orchids in her hair. She is a striking, glamorous figure who looks much younger than her 50 years and appears at first to carry her suffering lightly. Only in repose does her face offer a glimpse of the cost and the grit that has



Lt. Gen. Khin Nyunt, "Secretary One" of SLORC, is chair of the Tourism Division and Management Committee and doubles as the head of the secret service.

seen her through, though when she laughs this vanishes; it is like a blind closed and open.

We talked in a room dominated by a huge portrait of the father she barely knew, painted in the style of Andy Warhol by the artist Soe Moe at the height of the 1988 uprising. I asked her if her release from house arrest was a cynical exercise by the regime to give itself a human face. "I think they also miscalculated that the National League For Democracy was a spent force," she replied, "and that releasing me was not going to make any difference. ..."

"But with such a brute force confronting you," I asked, "how do you reclaim the power you won at the ballot box?" "We are not the first people to face this dilemma. In Buddhism we are

taught the four basic ingredients for success: first, you must have the will to want it; then you must have the right kind of attitude; then you must have the perseverance; then wisdom. ... " What struck me was her extraordinary optimism, fueled, it seemed, by her Buddhist principles that draw a stark contrast with the realities outside. This changed when I mentioned foreign investment. I said that the British Foreign Office minister, Jeremy Hanley, had told Parliament that "through commercial contacts with democratic nations such as Britain, the Burmese people will gain experience of democratic principles."

She laughed. "Not in the least bit, because the so-called market economy is only open to some. Investors will help only a small elite to get richer and richer. This works against the very idea of democracy because the gap between rich and poor is growing all the time. The same applies to tourism. They should stay away until we are a democracy. Look at the forced labor that is going on all over the country. A lot of it is aimed at the tourist trade. It's very painful. Roads and bridges are built at the expense of the people. If you cannot provide one laborer you are fined. If you cannot afford the fine, the children are forced to labor."

In his moving introduction to *Freedom From Fear*, a collection of essays by and about Aung San Suu Kyi, Michael Aris quotes from a letter she wrote him shortly before they married: "I only ask one thing: that should my people need me, you would help me to do my duty by them ... if we love and cherish each other as much as we can while we can, I am sure love and compassion will triumph in the end." I reminded her about this. "I asked him," she said, "to be sympathetic when the time came ... and he said, 'yes'. ... During my house arrest the longest period we were out of touch was two years and four or five months. I missed my family, and I worried about my sons very much because the young one was only 12, and he had to be put into boarding school. But then I'd remind myself that the families of my colleagues in prison were far worse off." She revealed that in her isolation she had difficulty breathing and would lie awake listening to the thump-thump of her heart, wondering if it would fail. There were times when she did not get enough to eat and her weight fell to 90 pounds.

"Weren't you terrified?" I asked.

"When I was small," she said, "it was in this house that I conquered my fear of the dark. I just wandered around in the darkness and by the end, I knew all the demons weren't there." During the first years of her house arrest, soldiers were ordered to lie with their ears to the ground so as to detect her "tunneling" to the house next door. They failed to grasp that she had no intention of escaping, or seeking exile. Outside, her name became a byword and people would pass her house just to be reassured by the sound of her playing the piano. When it stopped there were rumors that she was dead. "That was when the string broke," she said. "I was pumping too hard. I have a hot temper, so I took it out on the piano!" "Will Burma be free in the foreseeable future?" "Yes!" she replied unhesitatingly.

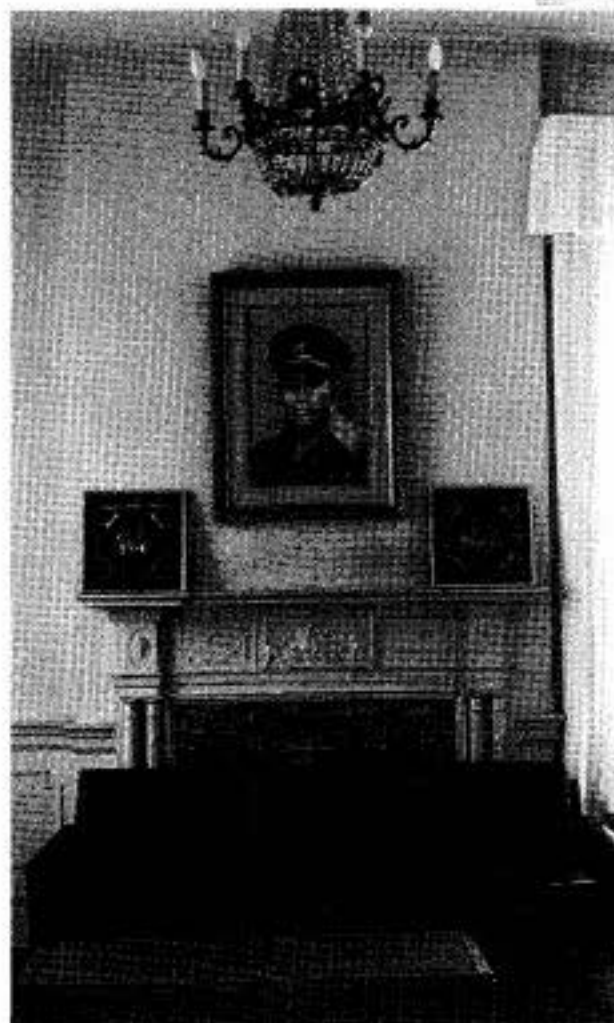
"That's not just a dream?" "No, I calculate it from the will of the people and the current of world opinion. ... I knew I'd be free ... some day."

The next day I joined the crowd outside her gate waiting for her to speak. The people were different from any I had seen; they were smiling, talking freely with each other, as if waiting for a gig to start. There were betel nut sellers and cheroot vendors and a man with a block of ice ingeniously balanced in a red sock, selling cups of cold water. With the grace and courtesy that is never deferential and is so much part of the Burmese character, people made way for the foreign Gulliver, offering a cushion for me to sit on.

When Suu Kyi appeared she was flanked by two other figures of principle and courage: General Tin Oo and U Kyi Maung, a former colonel, the vice-chairmen of the NLD, both of whom have spent years in prison. The clapping and whooping lasted minutes. She now looked grey and drawn. Yet she had people in stitches as she carefully mocked the dictatorship, using irony and parable (so I was told; she spoke only in Burmese). As they laughed, I counted the spooks in sunglasses, filming, photographing, watching. Their arbitrary power was like a presence. Recently, a young man tried to ease the crush by moving the barrier and was bundled away and given a two-year sentence.

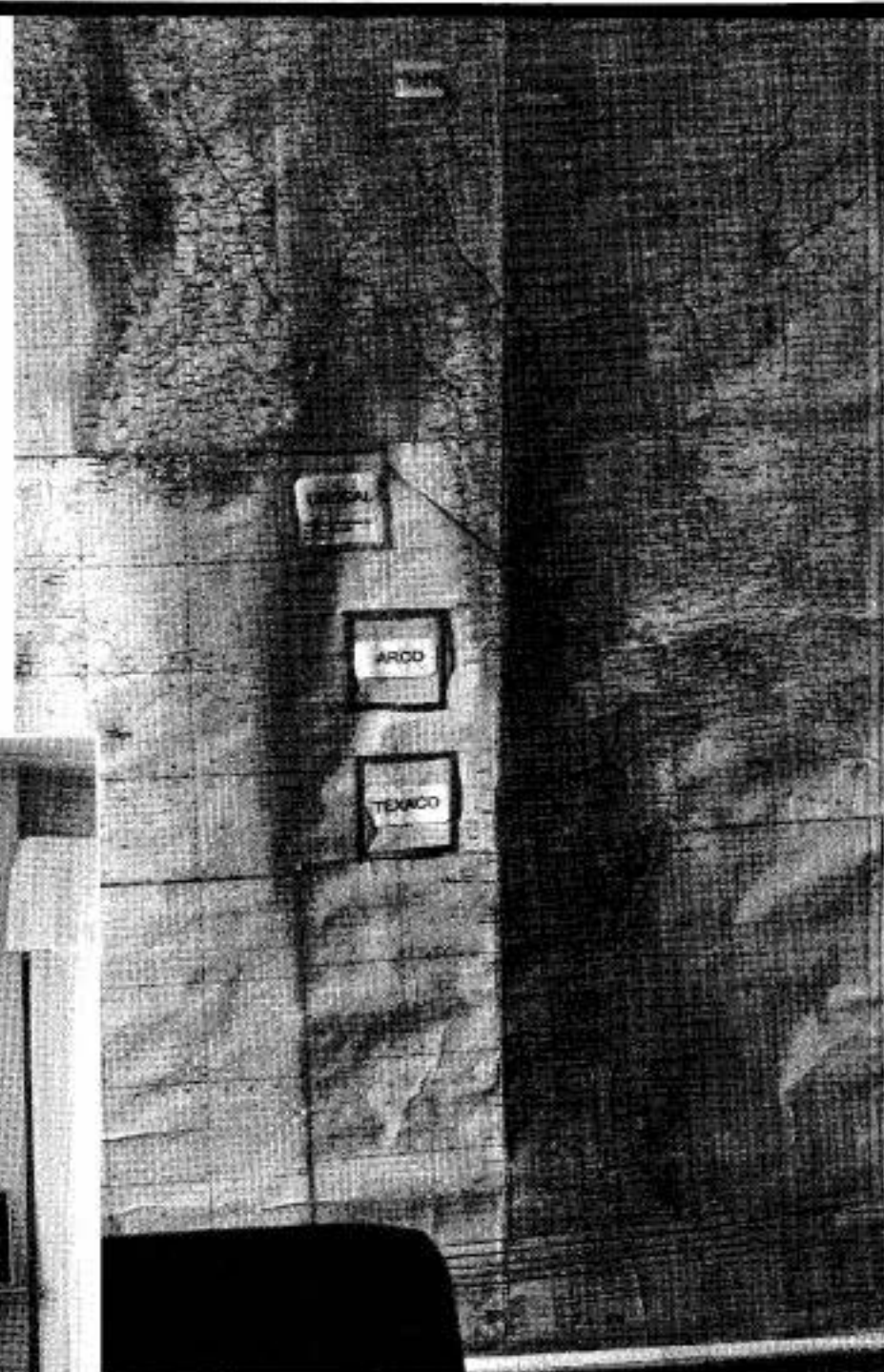
At the end of her speech, people asked questions. She leaned over the spikes in the fence and listened intently, replying expressively. An old

monk pushed through and asked her if she would join him in prayer; and she did. Most did not linger. A man told me he never went straight home after a meeting. "If they follow you," he said, "things start to happen. The power goes off; the kids are sent home crying from school." When I asked him if 1988 could happen again, this time successfully, he said: "Imagine a pedestrian



crosswalk. The traffic never seems to stop for the pedestrians. One or two dart across. The majority wait impatiently at the curb, then they surge across, until the traffic has lost all its power. Well, we are all back at the curb now, waiting impatiently." At that, he looked over my shoulder and walked quickly away.

Desmond Tutu — like Aung San Suu Kyi, a Nobel Peace Prize winner — said recently, "International pressure can change the situation in Burma. Tough sanctions, not constructive engagement, finally brought about a new South Africa. This is the only language that tyrants understand." What is hopeful is that there is the promise of sanctions in a remarkable disinvestment campaign already well underway in America. Based on the boycott of apartheid South Africa, selective purchasing laws have been enacted by a growing number of US cities, including



TERRY ALLEN

Portrait of Suu Kyi's father displayed at the Myanmar Embassy in Washington along with a giant wall map showing areas staked out by ARCO, Texaco and Unocal oil companies.

San Francisco and Madison, Wisconsin. Massachusetts has passed its own selective purchasing law, which has brought pressure on corporations based in the state, such as Gillette — although Gillette says it is no longer in Burma. These make municipal contracts with companies that trade with or invest in Burma illegal. New York state is considering similar legislation; and one of the biggest investors in Burma, Pepsi Cola, with its headquarters in upstate New York, has partially withdrawn.

Rep. Byron Rushing, who wrote Massachusetts' selective purchasing law, told me: "In the case of South Africa, we were able to put pressure on a whole range of companies, like General Motors, Coca-Cola, Pepsi Cola, and most eventually withdrew. And that really added to the pressure on the white government. That was a victory. As for Burma, it's not going to happen overnight, but we have started. The civilized world should follow." ■

Who Is Stealing Our Future



In 1994, industry released more than 1.1 billion pounds of toxins linked to human reproductive disorders.

Only 1 percent of the 70,000 different synthetic chemicals and metals in commercial use is monitored.

Despite grave public health threats, industry is fighting to keep polluting — and to keep the public in the dark.

by Pratap Chatterjee

Polar bears in the Arctic circle and albatrosses in the middle of the Pacific were the last creatures that scientists expected to be threatened by synthetic chemicals. But the pristine wilderness and the pure ocean vastness are as extinct as the dodo — and just as much casualties of human activity. When the albatross population suffered a 3 percent drop in reproduction rates over the last few years, New Zealand researchers discovered abnormally high levels of synthetic chemicals in the birds' bodies. When polar bear reproduction dropped by more than half, Norwegian researchers documented levels of toxic chemicals in the animals that are 3 billion times higher

than in the cold waters near which they live.¹

The recently published book, *Our Stolen Future*, brings together mounting scientific evidence that thousands of synthetic chemicals in common use are accumulating all along the food chain and are turning up everywhere from remote virgin forest to supermarket shelf. (See p. 17.) If the authors are right, a group of chemicals known as endocrine disruptors and hormone mimickers are undermining the health and genetic viability of hundreds of species, including humans. And because the implicated chemicals — including PCBs, chlorine, atrazine, DDT, and various plastics used to manufacture five gallon water containers and approximately half the canned goods in this country

— are so widely used in agriculture and industry, the financial vitality and survival of many corporations is also at stake. Not surprisingly, then, in addition to calls for further investigation and research, the storm of controversy around the new studies implicating these chemicals has also sparked a counterattack funded and promoted by the corporations that would be affected by regulation or a ban.

Mugging the Messengers

The way these chemicals work is to "mimic" or "block" estrogen and progesterone — natural chemicals known as hormones which instruct the body in how it should develop and reproduce. "Hormonally active synthetic chemicals are thugs on the biological information highway that sabotage vital communication. They mug the messengers or imperson-

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Photo: An 8-mile stretch of Jones Beach is blanketed with a DDT oil fog, 1945. UPI/Corbis-Bettmann.

1. Les Line, "Old Nemesis, DDT, Reaches Remote Midway Albatrosses," *New York Times*, Mar. 12, 1996, p. B1.

link between these chemicals and a well-documented and dramatic drop in human sperm count around the world. Some 61 studies collected by Danish researchers, have shown that sperm counts in a number of European countries have fallen by half in the last 30 years, while those in rapidly industrializing countries in East Asia are dropping fast.⁶

DES, (diethylstilbestrol) provided one of the first confirmed examples of how these chemicals can affect not only those who are directly exposed, but also future generations. In the late 1950s, and '60s this estrogen mimicker was prescribed to millions of women for a variety of problems. Grant Chemicals, one of the manufacturers, claimed that DES produced "bigger and stronger babies," while doctors handed it out to prevent miscarriages, suppress milk production, and as a "morning-after" contraceptive. It was not until the 1970s that researchers discovered that the drug dramatically increases chances of clear-cell cancer and severe damage to the reproductive tract that can result in ectopic pregnancies. (Pregnancies that develop in the fallopian tubes as opposed to the uterus can cause ruptures leading to severe bleeding and sometimes death.) DES is now suspected of having affected male offspring, and of possibly causing brain problems in children of both genders.⁷

Industry Fights Back

As they did when faced with evidence of the dangers of DES, tobacco, global warming, nuclear waste, and pesti-

cides, industry leaders have denied that there are any problems, and mounted PR campaigns. Faced with a growing body of evidence on the impact of chemicals on the

study was important to Monsanto because it was facing hundreds of millions, possibly billions, of dollars in lawsuits by tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans and by former Monsanto workers, all claiming they had been harmed by exposure to dioxin-laden Agent Orange.

Peter Montague, editor of *Rachel's Environment and Health Weekly*, charges that the Gaffey study gave the Veterans Administration the "evidence" it wanted to justify denying medical benefits to the Agent Orange vets. Finally, the research allowed the EPA "to set generous limits on dioxin exposures for the American public, thus providing minimal regulation for politically powerful industries such as paper, oil, and chemicals," says Montague.⁹

Gaffey's role may have gone beyond sycophant science. Lawyers involved in a 1984 worker lawsuit against Monsanto discovered that Gaffey had listed four workers as "unexposed" to dioxin when the same four workers had been classified as "exposed" to dioxin in a previous Monsanto study.

Gaffey's co-author, who had worked on both studies, confirmed that the data had been cooked. Six years later the EPA acknowledged that the study was fraudulent and found that dioxin was a probable carcinogen.¹⁰

Gaffey's role in countering the studies cited by cancer victims and environmental groups has been taken up by others. Among the most quoted scientists on this subject is Stephen H. Safe

of Texas A&M University, who has published papers contending that the con-



Published by the right-wing Hudson Institute, this 1995 volume includes such snappy chapter titles as:
"Preventing Cancer with Pesticides,"
"The Empty Threat of DDT," **"There's A Lot Less Hunger Than We've Been Told,"** and **"Drink Up, The Water's Fine."**

endocrine system, they have turned to industry-sponsored groups and scientists to disprove the studies available to potential litigants and quoted by environmental groups pushing for regulation.

One industry scientist with a long history of producing research that helped establish the safety of his employer's products was Bill Gaffey, a mathematician who retired in 1989 as director of epidemiology for Monsanto Corp. Gaffey published studies in 1980, a year after he started working for the chemical giant, to show that there was no evidence of unusual cancers among workers exposed to dioxin at a Monsanto plant in Nitro, West Virginia. The plant manufactured Agent Orange for chemical warfare in Vietnam.⁸ The

8. Judith Zack and William Gaffey, "A Mortality Study of Workers Employed at the Monsanto Company Plant in Nitro, West Virginia, in Human and Environmental

Risks of Chlorinated Dioxins and Related Compounds" (New York: Plenum Press, 1983), pp. 575-91.

9. Peter Montague, "Bill Gaffey's Work," *Rachel's Environment and Health Weekly*, May 16, 1996. Gaffey sued Montague, who wrote extensively about the controversy, over the matter but the case was dismissed soon after Gaffey died last October. The policy of denying Agent Orange-related disabilities was reversed in 1992.

10. *Ibid.* In 1990, EPA official Cate Jenkins sent a memo, "Criminal Investigation of Monsanto Corporation — Cover-up of Dioxin Contamination in Products — Falsification of Dioxin Health Studies" to her superiors, attaching a portion of a legal brief about the Gaffey study (and other studies sponsored by Monsanto), indicating she believed there was evidence of fraud. She followed up with "Impact of Falsified Monsanto Human Studies on Dioxin Regulations by EPA and Other Agencies — NIOSH Study Reverses Monsanto Study Findings and Exposes Certain Fraudulent Methods." The EPA promptly transferred Jenkins to an unimportant position with nothing to do. She spent the next several years in a legal battle of her own against EPA, finally winning complete exoneration and full reinstatement. Jenkins has since documented that EPA relied upon Monsanto's studies to set national dioxin standards.

6. Richard M. Sharpe and Niels E. Skakkebaek, "Are oestrogens involved in falling sperm counts and disorders of the male reproductive tract?" *The Lancet*, May 29, 1993, pp. 1392-395.

7. Colborn, *et al.*, *op. cit.*, see "Hormone Havoc," Chapt. 4, which provides evidence of how these chemicals could also be implicated in the 400 percent increase in ectopic pregnancies in the US.

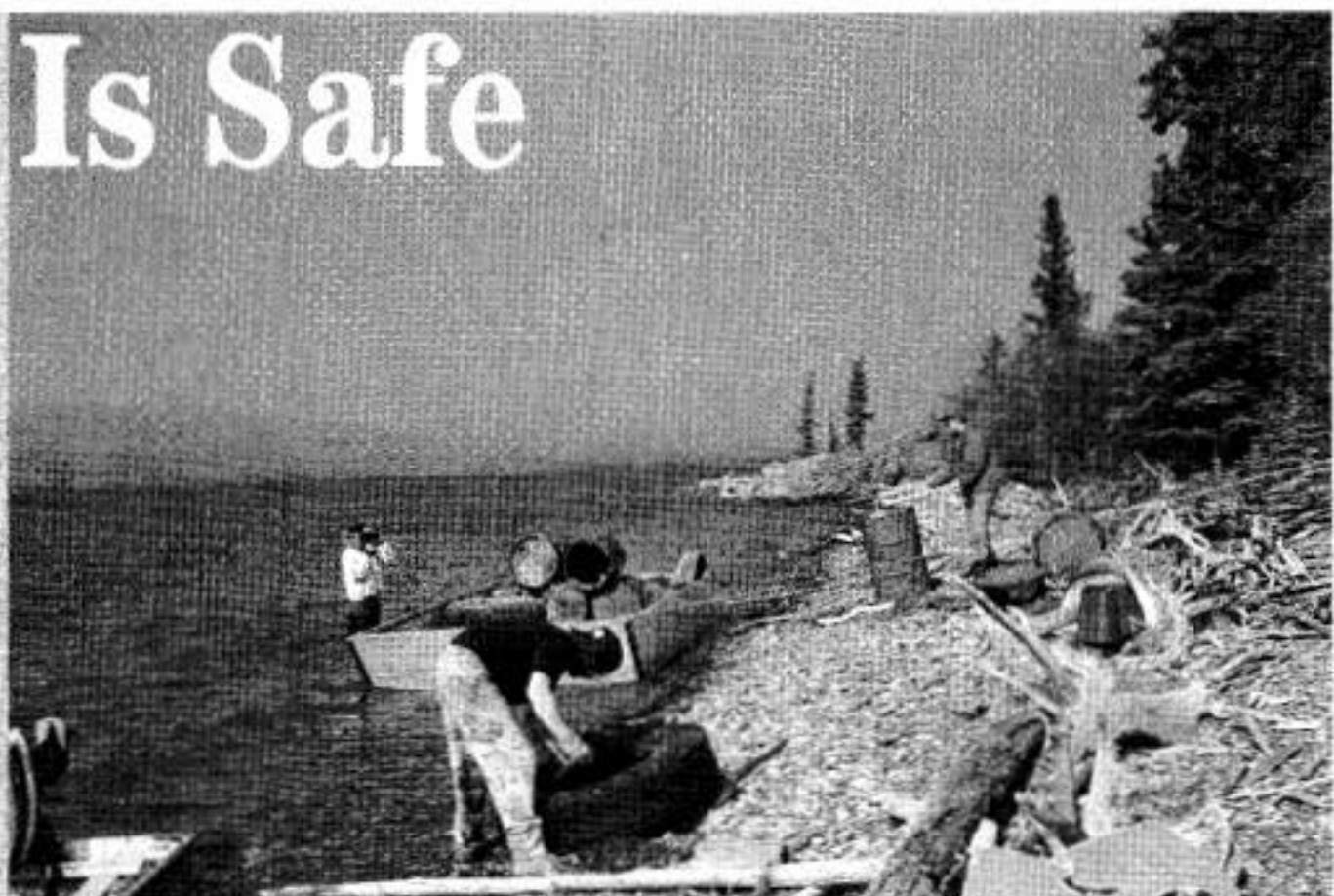
Nowhere Is Safe

As industry gears up to fight for its bottom line, local communities around the world are discovering that their lives and futures are at stake. Take for example, the Ta-an Kwach-an people who live by the shores of Lake Laberge in the southern Yukon territories near Alaska. This tiny 340-member indigenous group has suffered through centuries of toxic invasions — from diphtheria brought by miners of the gold rush to contaminants released by construction crews that dug up their land, to sewage flowing downstream from the city of Whitehorse.

Recently laboratory tests showed a new toxic threat: The fish and game they live off is poisoned with high levels of toxaphene, a toxic cocktail of some 250 chemicals which had been sold as a pesticide for such crops as cotton and potatoes. In some places, such as in Hansen Lake in the Yukon, toxaphene was used to wipe out "coarse" fish so that the water could be restocked with "sport" fish such as rainbow trout.

But toxaphene, banned over 20 years ago throughout North America, was never officially used anywhere near Lake Laberge. After first discounting the possibility of surreptitious dumping, David Schindler, of the University of Alberta in Edmonton, determined that toxaphene is being carried to the area by air. He theorizes that the winter polar winds which circulate around the Arctic could carry pollutants from places as far away as the Aral Sea, which lies between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, or from Central America. His research also shows that predatory fish have higher concentrations.

No tests have been done on the ducks that feed in the lake or the moose that come to graze the marshy shores. But Susan Thompson, from the Yukon government's Department of Rural Resources, says that the problem has not spread too far. Of the 20 lakes in the province tested by the government, fish in only one other lake, Lake Atlin, show high levels of toxaphene.



Toxic pollution affects even remote Lake Laberge in the Yukon and is poisoning people and wildlife while destroying a way of life.

David Donald, an Environment Canada scientist in Regina, Saskatchewan warns, however, that all fish over one kilogram in Canada's alpine lakes have toxic chemicals that exceed the safety levels prescribed by the government. "We're not talking about lakes near large agricultural plantations," he says. "We're talking about clear lakes in the mountains right across the country. They show levels of chemicals like DDT that I suspect is off-gassing from the land that they were used on 20 years ago and are now being carried around the world by air currents."

Shirley Adamson, Yukon vice-chief of the Assembly of First Nations, was angry when she heard about the toxaphene contamination. "People think of the north of Canada as the last frontier — pristine areas that are clean and sparkling — but unfortunately our environment has been polluted by others," she says. "We have always asked the government to do regular tests on the fish, the wild fowl and the animals that live here. The new studies that show that the fish have DDT, toxaphene, PCBs, mercury — to name just a few — are just frightening. ... Fish from the lake probably makes up 50 percent of our diet. But the lake is more than a source of fish, it is part of our soul. If it is destroyed, where will we go?" ■

tribution of synthetic chemicals to disruption of endocrine systems is so "minuscule" that it amounts to less than one-thousandth of one percent of the amount of naturally occurring chemicals that have the same effect.¹¹ He now tells reporters that the fears of environmentalists could be dangerous to the economy. "You could be talking about thousands of jobs and billions of dollars

to get rid of some of these chemicals, all because of something that we have no compelling reason to believe is really a threat."¹²

Safe, whose work is partly funded by the Chemical Manufacturers Association, is not the only industry-backed scientist to publish studies that dismiss the impact of endocrine-disrupting chemicals on human health. Last year,

researchers from Dow Chemical and Shell Oil showed that the use of more complex statistical models could generate the conclusion that human sperm counts have been increasing, not decreasing, during the past 20 years.¹³

These industry-funded studies have been given a major boost by Gina Kolata, a *New York Times* reporter, who used studies by Safe and others as

11. Stephen H. Safe, "Environmental and Dietary Estrogens and Human Health: Is There a Problem?" *Environmental Health Perspectives*, Apr. 1995, pp. 346-51.

12. Dan Fagin, "Estrogen Link: Search is on for chemicals that may spark breast cancer," *New York Newsday*, Dec. 28, 1994, p. A7.

13. Geary W. Olsen, et al., "Have sperm counts been reduced 50 percent in 50 years? A statistical model revisited," *Fertility and Sterility*, Apr. 1995, pp. 887-93.

Leaked Memo Shows How Industry Fights Environmentalists

Memorandum to: Clyde Greenert/Brad Lienhart [B.L. was CCC managing director.]
From: Jack Mongoven [head of Mongoven, Biscoe and Duchin (MBD) PR firm]
Date: September 7, 1994
Re: MBD Activist Report for August

Attached is a brief report on anti-chlorine groups' activities in August along with our characterization of those activities.

Recommendations regarding the individual activists were forwarded with the original detailed reports. Also attached is a list of all the recommendations we provided [the Chlorine Chemistry Council] in August as to how best to counter the activists. The main recommendation — to mobilize science against the precautionary principle — still applies and dovetails with the long range objectives regarding sound risk assessment.

It is obvious that the battleground for chlorine will be women's issues — reproductive health and children — and organizations with important constituencies of women opinion leaders should have priority. ... It is important in all cases to stay ahead of the activists, [scheduled to meet in New Orleans] e.g., get to the New Orleans media and opinion leaders before the Chemical Week Chlorine Conference and the same in each of the cities where [the Women's Economic and Development Organization] will hold conferences this fall.

Let me know if you need more, e.g., we maintain calendars of anti-chlorine events and could include same if you would like. Summary of MBD Recommendations to CCC (Chlorine Chemistry Council) August 1994 ...

- Special efforts should be made for the [November 1994, New Orleans] Chemical Week conference on chlorine. KPR (Ketchum Public Relations) should work with journalists, especially those who will be covering the conference, and CCC should work with Chemical Week about the tactics Greenpeace and its allies employ to gather media attention. Mobilize the attendees and communicate (by written and verbal communication) the threat the radicals pose and how to deal with it.
- Take advantage of the schisms [in] the Administration, i.e. within EPA and among EPA, USDA and FDA on the risk assessment section of the Dioxin Reassessment. CCC should quietly work with the industry coalitions to ensure that USDA and FDA are perceived to have the support of strong constituencies.
- Engage [Ketchum Public Relations] to reach out to editorial boards to highlight flaws in the risk assessment portion of the dioxin reassessment.
- Engage a broad effort on risk assessment within the scientific community, even in groups which have taken positions against chlorine.
- Move quickly to take advantage of the visibility of the shortcomings of the current system by having scientists and Congressmen ready to call for the process on risk assessment CCC and [Chemical Manufacturers Association] would like to see put in place.
- Schedule, through [Ketchum Public Relations], editorial board meetings in Dayton prior to Department of Health and Human Services Devra Lee Davis speech to a forum on breast cancer sponsored by Greenpeace and [others]...

This memo was first obtained by *PR Watch*, 3318 Gregory St., Madison, WI 53711.

- Continue existing CCC public relations and communications programs to counter activists' claims of the evils associated with dioxin as a weapon against chlorine chemistry.
- Also, use the grassroots extremists' charges against the role of science in shaping public policy as a call to arms within the professions whose credibility and relevancy are at stake.
- Urge the Vinyl Institute to begin immediately to build alliances on the PVC issue, beginning with those with an obvious economic stake, e.g., home builders, realtors, product manufacturers, hospitals and others who are immediately targeted.
- Form an alliance on PVC issues with the Mid-States Oil and Gas Association which is concerned about expansion of the activist anti-PVC program in the Gulf of Mexico and is seeking allies in the chemical industry ...
- Bring the state governors in on the issue of risk assessment by communicating the benefits to them from being able to rely on a national standard.
- Establish third-party entities devoted to developing these standards in the near future.
- Take steps to discredit the precautionary principle within the more moderate environmental groups as well as within the scientific and medical communities.
- It is especially important to begin a program directed to pediatric groups throughout the country and to counter activist claims of chlorine-related health problems in children ...

Prevent Medical Associations from Joining Anti-Chlorine Movement

- Create panel of eminent physicians and invite them to review data regarding chlorine as a health risk and as a key chemical in pharmaceuticals and medical devices.
- Publish panel's findings and distribute them widely to medical associations and publications.
- Stimulate peer-reviewed articles for publication in the [Journal of the American Medical Association] on the role of chlorine chemistry in treating disease. ... Convince through carefully crafted meetings of industry representatives (in pharmaceuticals) with organizations devoted to specific illnesses, e.g., arthritis, cystic fibrosis, etc., that the cure for their specific disease may well come through chlorine chemistry and ask them to pass resolutions endorsing chlorine chemistry and communicate their resolutions to medical societies.


NWF Says Chlorine is a Threat to Human Reproduction. One of the most significant recent developments in the anti-chlorine campaign is the National Wildlife Federation's publication of *Fertility on the Brink*, which attributes fertility and reproductive problems to exposure to chlorine-based chemicals. NWF uses the issue of fertility as a vehicle to play on the emotions of the public and its concern for future generations. ...

... Anti-chlorine groups will probably devise tactics which promote the adoption of the "precautionary principle." The principle, which shifts the burden of establishing a chemical's safety to industry, is unlikely to be adopted ... [but] will elevate the dioxin issue to a more conspicuous level. ... The industry must identify the implications posed by the "precautionary principle" and assist the public in understanding the damage it inflicts on the role of science in modern development and production. ■ "

background material for three major articles that throw cold water on *Our Stolen Future*. Kolata ran into trouble, however, when she quoted several scientists as skeptical of the book when the scientists themselves did not feel that way.¹⁴ "(E)ven in quoting these contrarian scientists, Ms. Kolata deceives and misleads her readers by selectively distorting their views," charged Montague. When the *New York Times* did not publish protest letters from the misrepresented scientists, they bought advertising space to set the record straight.¹⁵

Meanwhile, industry is actively lobbying to redirect the debate. In January 1991, chief executives of four major US paper companies — John A. Georges of International Paper, T. Marshall Hahn, Jr. of Georgia-Pacific, Furman C. Moseley of Simpson Paper, and Andrew C. Sigler of Champion International — went to see William Reilly, then head of EPA, to convince him to re-assess the impact of dioxin.¹⁶ A memo from the four to Reilly after the meeting described their satisfaction: "We were encouraged by what we perceived as your willingness to move expeditiously to re-examine the potency of dioxin and chloroform in light of the important new information that has been submitted with respect to those chemicals" which indicated the "prevailing view that low-level dioxin exposures do not pose a serious health threat."¹⁷

The EPA study, however, backfired on industry. In 1994, agency scientists concluded that dioxin probably causes cancer in wildlife and humans; harms the immune and reproductive systems in fish, birds, and mammals (including humans); and concluded that "there is no safe level of dioxin exposure and that



Toxic air pollution over Mexico City, for example, can be picked up by winds and rain that can carry it to all parts of the globe.

JULIO ETCHART/IMPACT VISUALS

any dose no matter how low can result in health damage."¹⁸

Looking to the Future

Industry, not satisfied with government studies, is commissioning its own investigations. The blandly named Endocrine Issues Coalition — put together by the American Crop Protection Association, the Chemical Manufacturers Association, and the Society of Plastics Industry — recently released a research agenda. It includes studies on breast cancer, sperm quality, and endometriosis in humans; estrogen effects in wildlife; a dioxin mechanistic study; animal and aquatic toxicology studies; environmental chemistry; testing methods; exposure studies; and risk assessment.¹⁹ According to Ron Miller of Dow Chemical Corp., chair of the EIC, the group has a million dollars in research funding.²⁰

Another industry-backed organization, the Chemical Industry Institute of Toxicology (CIIT) in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, has just launched a three-year, \$5 million research effort into how natural and synthetic chemicals affect the human hormone system. Cancer toxicology research — which tra-

ditionally took up two-thirds of its program — is now making way for the study of non-cancer effects such as neurotoxicity and endocrine effects. CIIT is funded by dues from about 40 member chemical companies including DuPont, Dow Chemical, Exxon Chemical, General Electric, and Hoechst Celanese. Not every major company is a member — BASF, Elf Atochem have never paid dues to CIIT — while other major players such as Amoco Chemical, BP America, Dow Corning, ICI Americas, Olin, and Rhone-Poulenc, have dropped out.²¹

In addition to sponsoring and promoting potentially sympathetic scientific studies, the affected industries are investing heavily in public relations campaigns designed to challenge the growing anti-chemical lobby. In 1993, the Chemical Manufacturers Association formed the Chlorine Chemistry Council (CCC) in Washington, DC, which in turn hired the aggressive public relations firm Mongoven, Biscoe and Duchin (MBD) to target environmental groups. John Mongoven, co-founder of the DC-based firm, has taken up the issue personally and publishes a monthly briefing for his clients. His long-term strategy in countering those warning of the dangers of disrupter chemicals, says Montague of *Rachel's Weekly*, is to characterize the

14. Gina Kolata, "Chemicals that mimic hormones spark alarm and debate," and "Sperm Counts: Some Experts See a Fall, Others See Poor Data," Mar. 19, 1996; and "Are U.S. Men Less Fertile? Latest Research Says No," *New York Times*, Apr. 29, 1996.

15. "When It Comes to Chemicals, Is Only Good News Fit to Print?" (advertisement), *New York Times*, May 29, 1996, p. A19.

16. Dioxin is a byproduct of the bleaching of paper.

17. Letter to Reilly from John A. Georges, International Paper; T. Marshall Hahn, Jr., Georgia-Pacific Corp.; Furman C. Moseley, Simpson Paper; and Andrew C. Sigler, Champion International, Jan. 25, 1991, sent as a follow-up to a Jan. 23 meeting in Washington.

18. Peter Montague, "Dioxin Inquisition," *Rachel's Environment and Health Weekly*, Aug. 31, 1995.

19. National Environment Daily, "White house, industry groups outline research plans on effects of chemicals," Bureau of National Affairs, Apr. 2, 1996.

20. Fagin, *op. cit.*

21. *Ibid.*; and Ronald Begley, "Risk Research: In Need of a funding boost?" *Chemical Week*, Mar. 8, 1995.

Toxic Thugs

Some of the 51 "disruptive" chemicals identified and researched so far are found in our food, while others are used to manufacture gadgets and products that we use commonly around the house. They include many pesticides that have long been regarded as dangerous such as atrazine (the most heavily used pesticide in this country) and DDT (another pesticide banned in this country, but still used in many tropical nations to control the spread of malaria).¹ Other synthetic chemicals such as polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) have been banned for several years, but since they were widely used as coolants in electrical fixtures that were discarded improperly, the chemicals regularly show up in local trash dumps and are abandoned at factory sites.²

Still other chemicals, dioxins for example, are created as unwanted by-products of industrial processes such as waste incineration, paper bleaching, and the manufacture of PVC (polyvinyl chloride). Believed to be one of the most toxic substances, dioxin was one of the chemicals in Agent Orange (a chemical spray notorious for its use in the US war against Vietnam) which had the ability to strip living trees bare of leaves.³

As research continues, new chemicals, once touted as benign, are discovered to be toxic. In 1989, Dr. Ana Soto and Dr. Carlos Sonnenschein from the Tufts University School of Medicine in Boston discovered that a group of chemicals

called alkylphenols were also potential hazards. Like nonylphenol, these are added to PVC — a material common in many household products — to make the plastic more flexible. Nonylphenol is also a breakdown product of nonoxynol-9, a contraceptive cream, as well as household detergents.⁴

At the very same time that Soto was doing her research

in Boston, Stanford Professor David Feldman discovered that bisphenol-A—a chemical used to make polycarbonate plastics, to line cans, and to manufacture giant bottled water containers—can act as an endocrine disrupter. It has been found in almost half the canned goods tested by scientists.⁵ And since nonylphenol and bisphenol-A are classified as "inert," substances by the EPA and FDA, they are not listed on labels so that cautious consumers can avoid them.

Strict regulation of new and old chemicals would be the sanest, safest course; it would

not, however, be the most profitable for the corporations that manufactures them. ■



In everything from mother's milk, to water bottles, to half of all cans, estrogen mimickers are sparking calls for bans.

1. Theo Colborn, Frederick S. vom Saal, and Ana M. Soto, "Developmental Effects of Endocrine-Disrupting Chemicals in Wildlife and Humans," *Environmental Health Perspectives*, Oct. 1993, pp. 378-84.
2. Colborn, et al., "To the Ends of the Earth," chap. 6.
3. Montague, "Dioxin Inquisition," *op. cit.*
4. Ana Soto, et al., "p-Nonylphenol: An estrogenic Xenobiotic released from modified polystyrene," *Environmental Health Perspectives*, 1991, pp. 167-73.
5. A. Krishnan, et al., "Bisphenol-A: an estrogenic substance is released from polycarbonate flasks during autoclaving," *Endocrinology*, v. 132, 1993, pp. 2279-286.

"phase out chlorine" position as "a rejection of accepted scientific method," as a violation of the chlorine industry's constitutional right to "have the liberty to do what they choose," and thus a threat to fundamental American values.²²

It is not the first time Mongoven has flacked for potentially deadly products. He began his PR career in 1981 when he was hired by the Nestlé Corp. to organize its response to a consumer boycott. Activists had charged that the company's infant formula marketing prac-

tices in the Third World encouraged poor women with no access to clean water to abandon breast-feeding and switch to expensive infant formula. Using dossiers that Mongoven compiled on the churches and other groups leading the boycott, Nestlé played on divisions and rivalries within the activist coalition to talk wavering "moderates" into abandoning the boycott.²³

MBD has often used similar strategies to neutralize activist groups on behalf of a variety of corporate clients.

Forexample, after analyzing dioxin opposition, MBD picked the New York-based environmental group INFORM as a "moderate" group worth targeting for possible cooptation. This kind of tactic is an MBD specialty according to *PR Watch* editor John Stauber. He writes:

The field operatives who gather information for Mongoven, Biscoe & Duchin are typically polite, low-key and do their best to sound sympathetic to the people they are interrogating. They have misrepresented themselves, claiming falsely to be journalists, friends of friends, or

22. Peter Montague, "Chemical Industry Strategies," *Rachel's Health and Environment Weekly*, May 23, 1996.

23. John Stauber and Sheldon Rampton, *Toxic Sludge Is Good for You* (Monroe, ME: Common Courage Press, 1995), p. 51.

supporters of social change. Most of the time, however, they simply give very limited information, identifying their company only by its initials and describing MBD euphemistically as a "research group" that helps "corporate decision makers ... develop a better appreciation of the public interest movement" in order to "resolve contentious public policy issues in a balanced and socially responsible manner."

Flacking for Secrecy

But perhaps the most far-reaching lobbying efforts are those directed at changing government regulations. In January, Ciba-Geigy's Crop Protection division met with the EPA's Office of Water and Office of Pesticide Programs to present its own studies on the health impact of the pesticide atrazine to counter evidence of health risks presented by the Washington-based Environmental Working Group.²⁴

Industry lobbying groups have also quietly begun to work with government to change the way that emissions of toxic chemicals are reported to the public. Traditionally, all emissions of chemicals listed as toxic by the government must be reported in a form that is accessible to the public. In the last three years, 18 states have voted in various versions of laws that allow companies to avoid telling authorities about such emissions if industry conducts systematic environmental audits internally. The *Wall Street Journal* says that the new laws "encourage companies to monitor their own activities rigorously without fear that what they discover will be used against them." The newspaper reports that these laws have been promoted by several industry lobby groups including the Compliance Management and Policy Group, the Corporate Environmental Enforcement Council, and the Coalition for Improved Environmental Audits.²⁵

One such law in Colorado allows companies to withhold information about air pollution. Another, under debate in Arizona, would implement the "broadest secrecy laws in the nation preventing the public from knowing what has actually happened at a facil-

ity," according to Felicia Marcus, regional administrator for the EPA.²⁶

Lifestyle Changes

Even when health authorities and governments make a conscientious effort to set safety standards, they face considerable difficulties. One of the main problems is that the "safe" levels for chemicals in emissions and in everyday products such as pesticides have been traditionally based on their impact on adults, not children, who are at a far greater risk; the assumption is that it is mostly adults who use these products. But there is growing worry that the quantity of the chemical is largely irrelevant; the crucial question is not how much, but when exposure occurs. Thus one part in a million of a certain chemical may be perfectly safe during 99.99 percent of the life-cycle of a normal human being, but exposure to one part in a trillion at a particular time during pregnancy may cause a life-long tragedy.

Given this danger, some activists say the only way to prevent widespread sickness and disease is to question the

Given this danger, some activists say the only way to prevent widespread sickness and disease is to question the current course of human "progress."

current course of human "progress." Montague, who has been tracking the effects of synthetic chemicals on human health for 10 years, advocates questioning the use of all such substances. "The studies show that the strange new chemicals that govern our current patterns of lifestyle and consumption are killing us and making us sick," he says. "There is a clear pattern in our history that shows that every time we discover a dangerous chemical, we substitute it with a different one that we know very little about. We can't continue to do this. We have to stop using these chemicals and start living simpler lives."²⁷

Some institutions have already suggested that entire classes of chemicals be banned. Studies by the International Joint Commission, a scientific body set up to study water quality in the Great Lakes in Canada and the US, have shown that of

the toxic substances found in the lakes, half of those that cause cancer and other health problems contain chlorine. As a result, the Commission recommended phasing out all chlorine-based chemicals. This conclusion was endorsed by the American Public Health Association.²⁸

While most scientists and government agencies are taking a "wait and see" approach, some local communities around the country are organizing to get answers for themselves. Last year a grassroots group of women in Marin County, California, a region that has the highest rate of breast cancer in the nation, decided to stop waiting for the medical community and commissioned its own research. The Marin Breast Cancer Watch is currently preparing a survey of the county to try to determine if environmental causes can explain the high cancer rates.²⁹

In Seattle, groups including the Women's Health Action Network and the Washington Toxics Coalition meet monthly to talk about issues of reproductive health and synthetic chemicals. Major environmental organizations like the

Environmental Defense Fund and Greenpeace have also begun to lobby government and industry on these matters in national capitals.

While industry claims we don't know enough to justify action, many activists and researchers warn

that if we wait for definitive answers, it may be too late. The cost of doing nothing will be illness and death for individuals, devastation of the environment, and serious genetic damage for many species, including humans. Many of the estimated 100,000 chemicals on the market today have not undergone rigorous testing and about 1,000 new ones are added every year. The burden of proof must shift so that the individual and combined impact of these chemicals is assessed and those that are not proven safe are banned. A phase-out period may be necessary to find natural substitutes and alternatives for substances already in use, but the ultimate goal must be a ban on such substances. In addition, no new chemicals should be introduced until complete testing is completed. ■

28. Montague, "Chemical Industry Strategies ... " *op. cit.*
29. Beth Ashley, "Marin women seek answers to high breast cancer rates," *Marin Independent Journal*, June 23, 1996.

24. "Weed Killers report findings may be cause for concern: EPA," *Pesticide & Toxic Chemical News*, Aug. 23, 1996; and "Ciba meets with EPA ...," *op. cit.*

25. John Cushman, "Many states give polluting firms new protections," *Wall Street Journal*, Apr. 7, 1996, p. A1.

26. *Ibid.*

27. Interview, June 1996.

Globalization and the Criminalization Of Economic Activity

THE BUSINESS OF CRIME AND THE CRIMES OF BUSINESS

by Michel Chossudovsky

*"If you rob from many 100 percent
There could be a moral offense.
A few points more, a few points less
Morality is a question of percent."*

— from *The Secret, One Day*
by Raúl Salinas de Gortari

Every few weeks throughout 1993, a mysterious courier brought a cashier's check to the 16th floor glass-walled offices of Citibank's subsidiary in Mexico's capital. Following instructions, the clerks converted the pesos and wired \$3-5 million to New York Citibank, which sent it on to Switzerland. In this way, Raúl Salinas de Gortari, brother of then president of Mexico Carlos Salinas de Gortari, transferred at least \$100 million out of his country and into the secret, protected world of "private banking." After electronically landing in Switzerland, the money was shifted to untraceable Cayman Island shell accounts set up for Salinas. As is the norm for off-shore banking, these obfuscating corporations and accounts were created without disclosing the owners. Not normal, however, was the scandal that swirled around this high-profile case and the unusual amount of light it cast on the hidden world of private banking. Citibank, among Mexico's largest creditors, bore the legal onus of ensuring that it was not part of an illegal money laundering scheme. And even though Raúl drew a \$190,000 annual salary (enormous in a country where the minimum wage is \$3 a day), someone should have "asked questions." Salinas, now in prison,

is charged with drug trafficking as well as masterminding the assassination of a rival. In 1993, according to the *New York Times*, he told investigators that Citibank officials in New York "came up with the whole strategy." Nor was that unusual, the report went on. The "details" of Raúl's accounts "were complex, but the basic principles for handling Mr. Salinas' money were straightforward, and designed to get his money to a safe haven without being traceable." Indeed, the same strategy is used daily around the globe to whisk fortunes,

"Respectable" banks routinely blur the line between organized crime and organized capital by accepting dirty, covert, and black money and turning it all a clean, neutral green.

some made legally and some through crime, out of almost every country in the world and into secret accounts. In Mexico alone, in 1994, the year Carlos Salinas' six-year presidency ended, \$20 billion — much of it collected through criminal activity — quietly slipped out of the country this way.¹

No Questions Asked

In this vast world of private banking, "respectable" banks routinely blur the line between organized crime and organized capital by accepting dirty, covert, and black money and turning it all a clean, neutral green. Contrary to the Hollywood stereotypes and the sensa-

tionalism of investigative journalism, much of organized crime's activities do not imply a "break-down of law and order." In fact, the immense sums of money they handle are routinely concealed with great order and in accordance with laws designed precisely to protect the assets of the legally and illegally wealthy alike from the scrutiny of tax collectors and law enforcement agencies. Thus, while the misdeeds of "the petty criminal" are spotlighted by the press and police, the broader political and economic functions of international criminal

organizations, operating as bona fide business entities in the global marketplace, are just part of the system.

At the top, the mafias have abandoned the black bag for the computer, the machine gun in the violin case for the stock portfolio in the briefcase. This shift from the blood-drenched

fringe to polished wood boardroom has been facilitated by the global trend toward "economic liberalization," which has seen the downsizing of the state, the deregulation of international banking and trade, the privatization of state assets, etc. These conditions not only benefit transnational corporations which vigorously promote them, but favor the growth of illicit activities and the "internationalization" of the criminal economy as well. And indeed, the line between the two realms is often thinner than the stripe in a Saville Row suit.

TNCs and TCOs

The profits of organized crime are vast and its influence wide on both local and global levels. The UN estimates the worldwide revenues of the "transnational

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1. Information on Salinas from Anthony DePalma and Peter Truell, "A Mexican Mover and Shaker and How His Millions Moved," *New York Times*, June 5, 1996, p. A1.



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In the past, crime and capitalism were crude and violent. Increasingly, both rely on more sophisticated mechanisms of control. US '30s-style gangster, (l.), ad for off-shore banking (c.), Japanese Yakuza (r.).

criminal organizations" (now known as TCOs) at \$1 trillion — about the same as the combined GDP of the group of low income countries (with a population of 3 billion people).² The total includes trade in narcotics, arms sales, smuggling of nuclear materials, as well as earnings from the organized crime-controlled service economy such as prostitution, gambling, and currency exchange banks. What this figure does not convey is the magnitude of routine investments by criminal organizations in "legitimate" business undertakings, as well as their command over productive resources in many areas of the legal economy.

And just as corporations have increased their reach and influence by forming transnational entities that can evade control by individual nations, organized crime, too, has gone global. A new transnational relationship has emerged between the Chinese triads, the Japanese *yakuza*, and the European and US mafias. Rather than protecting their traditional turf, criminal organizations in different parts of the world have joined

forces "in a spirit of global cooperation" geared toward "opening up new markets" in both the criminal and legal economies.³ According to one observer, "organized crime groups outperform most Fortune 500 companies ... with organizations that resemble General Motors more than they resemble the traditional Sicilian mafia."⁴ In Russia, said FBI Criminal Division official Jim Moody, "the transition to capitalism provided new opportunities quickly exploited by criminal organizations [... which are] cooperating with other foreign criminal groups, including those based in Italy and Colombia."⁵

The mafias have abandoned the black bag for the computer, the machine gun in the violin case for the stock portfolio in the briefcase.

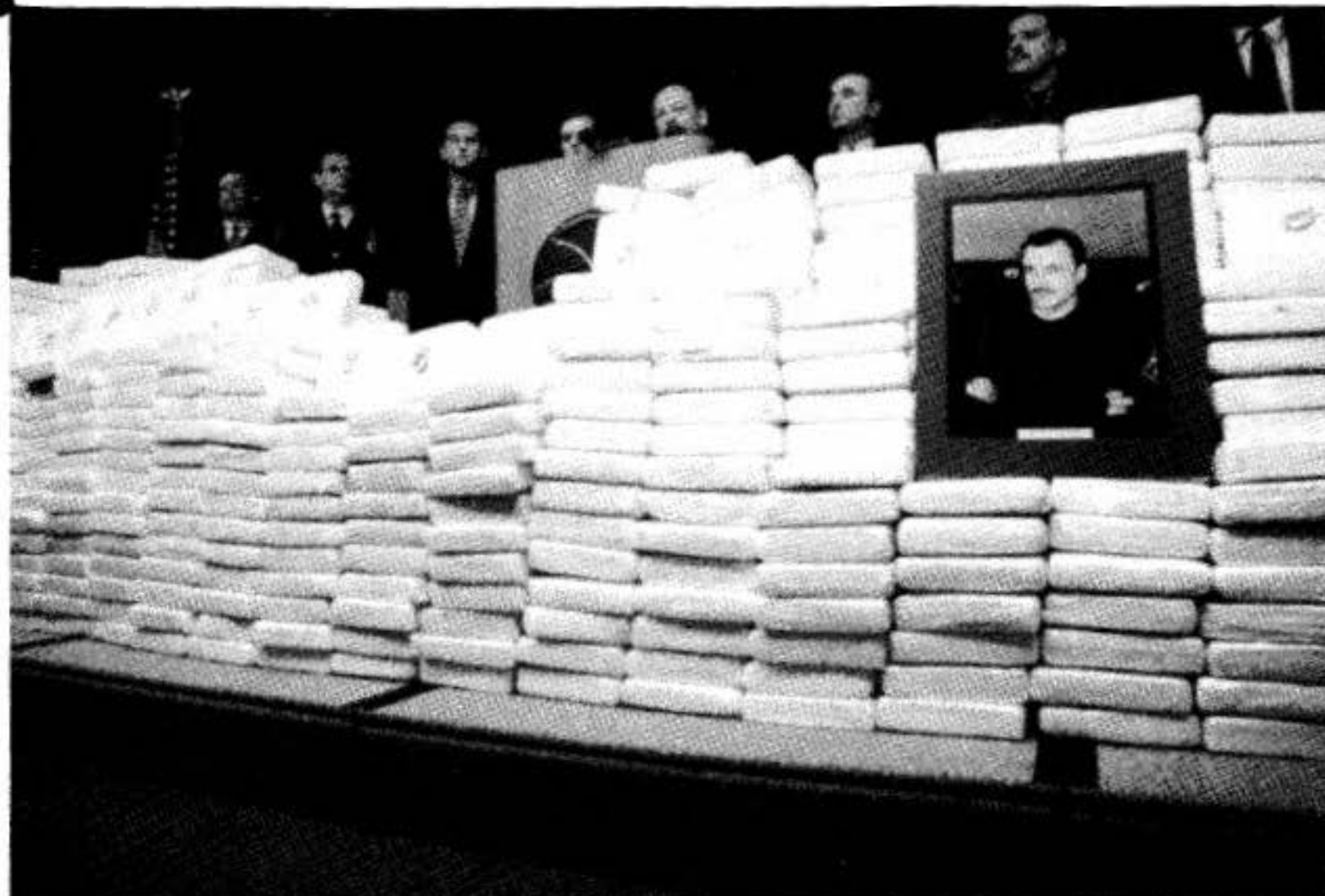
3. Daniel Brandt, "Organised Crime Threatens the New World Order," *Namebase Newswire*, n. 8, Jan.-Mar. 1995; "Transnational Criminal Organizations: Strategic Alliances," *The Washington Quarterly*, Winter 1995.

4. Brandt, *op. cit.*

5. Congressional testimony reported in Reuter's news dispatch, Jan. 25, 1995.

In addition to cooperating with each other, criminal organizations routinely collaborate with legal business enterprises. By investing in a variety of "legitimate" undertakings they cannot only launder dirty money, but also accumulate wealth outside the criminal economy. The favored "legitimate" areas include prime real estate, the entertainment industry, publishing and the media, financial services. More recently, the mafias have invested in public utilities, manufacturing, and agriculture. In Japan, the three largest crime groups, the *Yamaguchi-gumi*, the *Inagawa-kai*, and the *Sumiyoshi-kai* have "streamlined" their activities, moving from traditional money spinners such as drugs, prostitution, and gambling, into modern business undertakings. With the speculative boom of the 1980s, for example, the *yakuza* invested heavily in construction and urban property development. These ventures were funded through *jusen* (housing loan companies recently driven into bankruptcy by the collapse of Tokyo land values). *Jusen* in turn were backed by collateral loans from Japan's major com-

2. See the proceedings of the UN Conference on Crime Prevention, Cairo, May 1995; also Jean Hervé Deiller, "Gains annuels de 1000 milliards pour l'Internationale du crime," *La Presse* (Montreal), Apr. 30, 1996.



FRED PHILLIPS/IMPACT VISUALS

Cocaine confiscated in a New York bust by the Drug Enforcement Administration.

mercial banks. In Italy, the Cosa Nostra invests in both urban real estate and agricultural land. In Thailand, billions of dollars from the Golden Triangle heroin trade were recycled by Bangkok's business syndicates and secret societies toward investments in the textile industry.⁶ Hundreds of millions in Mexican drug money went to buy up state-owned industries during the wave of privatization initiated under Salinas. The Chinese triads channel money to the Hong Kong film industry and invest in industrial joint ventures in Guangdong and Fujian provinces and in the Shenzhen special economic zone. Annual worldwide earnings of the triads are estimated at \$200 billion, more than 40 percent of mainland China's GDP.⁷

Criminalization of Politics

In order to thrive, criminal syndicates, like legitimate businesses, need friends in high places. In the new global financial environment, powerful undercover political lobbies connected to organized crime cultivate links to prominent political figures and senior government officials. This phenomenon is common not only in the emerging market economies, but also in the European Union, the US,

and in Japan, where corruption has become rampant. In Europe's most blatant example, Italy, the entire political establishment has been permeated by the Cosa Nostra. In addition to the indictment of former Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, 3,000 state bureaucrats and corporate executives have been investigated or indicted on corruption charges.⁸

In several Latin American countries, the drug cartels are tightly integrated into the state system and ruling parties. As a scandal around the Liberal Party of Colombia revealed, the Cali Cartel funneled sizeable contributions to the election campaign of President Ernesto Samper. In 1995, more than a dozen Colombian congressmembers, the Comptroller, the Attorney General, and the Defence Minister were indicted for accepting pay-offs from the Cali cartel. Similarly, the 1994 political killings in Mexico, including the alleged involvement of former President Carlos Salinas and his brother Raúl, have exposed the inside role of the Mexican drug cartels in the ruling Partido Revolucionario Institucional (PRI). Drug lord Juan Garcia Abrego had as his patron the brother of the president.⁹ In Bolivia, since the mid-1980s, successive government coalitions under

the protection of the party of Acción Democrática Nacional (ADN), headed by former military dictator Gen. Hugo Banzer, were alleged to have ties to the drug trade.¹⁰

In Venezuela, the narcomafias had allegedly used the country's largest commercial bank, Banco Latino, to launder drug profits. Before its spectacular downfall along with 19 other Venezuelan banks in 1994, Banco Latino was controlled by the family of Pedro Tinoco, who was also head of the Central Bank under the government of President Carlos Andres Pérez (prosecuted on corruption charges).¹¹ Tinoco was the main architect of Venezuela's structural adjustment program launched in 1988. In the words of one observer, "the drug cartels have created a

sympiotic relationship between the economic and political structures. ..."¹² And there, as elsewhere around the world, such relationships positioned criminal organizations to exert decisive influence over macro-economic policy.

Covert Money

One area of government which seems to have a special proclivity for trading favors with criminal organizations is intelligence. Since the end of World War II, Western intelligence agencies have developed a complex relationship with the illegal narcotics trade in particular. In case after case, drug money laundered in the international banking system has financed covert operations. In the Indochina war, according to historian Alfred W. McCoy, first France in the 1950s and later the US used the opium

**In case after case,
drug money laundered in the
international banking system
has financed covert operations.**

6. Based on field research and interviews conducted by the author in China and Thailand.

7. In regard to China's GDP, see World Bank, *World Development Report, 1995*, Washington, D.C., 1995.

8. Tyler Marshall, "Venue Change Sought" *Austin-American Statesman*, Sept. 27, 1995.

9. CAPA Working Group, "Report on Canada's Sixth Year in the OAS," CAPA Occasional Paper, June 1996, p. 26.

10. Chossudovsky, *The Globalisation of Poverty*, op. cit., chap. 11.

11. *Dépêche internationale des drogues*, No. 51, Jan. 1996, p. 8.

12. Statement of Alejandro Reyes of the National University of Colombia, quoted in Anna Proenza, "De la concentración vertical a la multiplicación de carteles," *Le Monde Dossiers et Documents*, Jan. 1996.

economy to fund Meo tribe mercenaries in Laos. In the 1960s, the Meo army was funded by the narcotics trade as part of Washington's military strategy against the combined forces of the neutralist government of Prince Souvanna Phouma and the Pathet Lao.¹³ Washington gave food aid to the Meo which facilitated a shift to opium cultivation: "With the rice from Air America and good opium prices from [the US-backed] Vang Pao's officers," wrote McCoy, "the farmers of Long Pot had chosen to emphasize opium cultivation."¹⁴

The pattern of drug politics set in Indochina has been replicated in Central America and the Caribbean. "The rising curve of cocaine imports to the US," wrote journalist John Dinges, "followed almost exactly the flow of US arms and military advisers to Central America."¹⁵ The military in Guatemala and Haiti, to which the CIA provided covert support, were known to be involved in the trade of narcotics into Southern Florida. And as revealed in the Iran-

with stinger missiles and other military hardware it needed the full cooperation of Pakistan. By the mid-1980s, the CIA operation in Islamabad was one of the largest US intelligence stations in the World. "If BCCI is such an embarrassment to the US that forthright investigations are not being pursued it has a lot to do with the blind eye the US turned to the heroin trafficking in Pakistan," said a US intelligence officer.¹⁷

Recycling Dirty Money

Most of the profits reaped by criminal organizations, however, are cycled through the perfectly ordinary channels favored by their legitimate counterparts. The money goes into commercial banks, which use it to expand their lending activities to both the legal and criminal economies. Dirty and covert money is also funneled to "respectable" investments such as derivatives, primary commodities, stocks, and government bonds. In many countries, it is through these bonds that criminal organizations, holding big chunks of public debt, influence government economic policy.

With so much in common, it is not surprising that the same global financial system which favors legal corporations and banks also serves criminal organizations. Regulations which foster capital flight to offshore havens help not only wealthy individuals move "black money" (money which has evaded tax authorities), but also help criminal syndicates to transport dirty money. And in both cases, the banks make out like bandits by exacting hefty commissions on the transactions.

The commercial banks also profit by lending great sums to the criminal syndicates. These infusions of capital support the expansion of the criminal economy as well as the penetration of the legal economy by organized crime. The mafias in turn pump sizeable investments into commercial banks, some of which they control, and into

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brokerage and law firms which can prove useful as well as profitable. Scholar Jonathan Harris conservatively estimates that the US banking system launders \$100 billion a year for organized crime using some of America's largest commercial banks.¹⁸ Another study points to the role of New York's large investment houses, as well as Wall Street's bullion and foreign exchange dealers in the laundering of drug money.

While there have been numerous documented cases of money laundering, very few banks have been prosecuted and criminal indictments are invariably limited to local level bank employees. In a 1994 court settlement in Houston, Texas, for instance, American Express Bank International (AEBI) was fined \$7 million and forfeited more than \$25 million to settle money-laundering charges.

The case against AEBI grew out of criminal charges brought against two bank directors working in Beverly Hills, California, who were convicted of ... moving funds through American Express accounts controlled by holding companies created in the Cayman Islands. To obtain the settlement, federal officials agreed to forego a criminal indictment of AEBI. "We decided that the criminal activity was not pervasive through the entire company,"

Contra and Bank of Commerce and Credit International (BCCI) scandals, there is strong evidence that covert operations were funded through the laundering of drug money. "Dirty money" recycled through the banking system — often through an anonymous shell company — became "covert money," used to finance various rebel groups and guerrilla movements including the Nicaraguan Contras and the Afghan Mujahadeen.¹⁶

Because the US wanted to supply the mujahadin rebels in Afghanistan

13. See Alfred W. McCoy, *The Politics of Heroin in Southeast Asia* (New York: Harper and Row, 1972).

14. *Ibid.*, pp. 273-74.

15. John Dinges, *Our Man in Panama: The Shrewd Rise and Brutal Fall of Manuel Noriega* (New York: Times Books, 1991), pp. 123-24.

16. For more on the drug-arms-covert action nexus, see Tim Weiner, Stephen Engelberg, and Howard W. French, "CIA Formed Haitian Unit Later Tied to Narcotics Trade," in James Ridgeway, ed., *The Haitian Files: Decoding the Crisis* (Washington, DC: Essential Books, 1994); Walter La Feber, *Inevitable Revolutions* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1993); and Peter Dale Scott and Jonathan Marshall, *Cocaine Politics* (Berkeley, Calif.: University Press, 1991).

17. Jonathan Beaty, "The Dirtiest Bank of All," *Time*, July 29, 1991, p. 22.

18. Jonathan Harris, *Drugged America* (Toronto: MacMillan, 1991), pp. 52, 59.

Offshore accounts can be accessed through automatic teller machines anywhere in the world with a VISA card.

says Assistant U.S. Attorney David Novak. "It was limited to one branch office."¹⁹

Offshore Banking Havens

Almost all roads in this tangled financial network lead offshore to the banking havens. Without the cumbersome smuggling of banknotes across international borders, they move and conceal the proceeds of illicit trade through a web of offshore hideaways and a maze of anonymous shell companies.²⁰ It is here that the criminal syndicates and the representatives of the world's largest commercial banks interact. Here, criminal organizations take advantage of services offered, and of the advances in telecommunications and banking technologies. Nothing could be easier; now offshore accounts can be accessed through an automatic teller machine anywhere in the world with a VISA card and funds can be transferred instantaneously and transformed into cash.

The same privacy, technology, and lack of regulation that attract the criminals help legal money flow between a parent company and its subsidiary

Often illicit trade is the only source of essential foreign exchange, and creditors and debtors alike share an interest in the uninterrupted flow of lucrative contraband.

shell corporation. In Luxembourg, the British Channel Islands, the Cayman Islands, Vanuatu, the Cook Islands, and about 50 other locations around the globe, many of the world's major banks set up private banking affiliates that offer "discrete and personalized service" for the establishment of "tax efficient" accounts. But despite often exotic locations, these offshore havens are by-and-large appendages of the Western banking system. The Caribbean havens, for example, were set up under British banking legislation with technical advice from Western banks. Called

"carbon copies of each other," they are based on British laws that ensure total privacy and set criminal penalties for bank employees who disclose confidential corporate or banking information. In the sleazy upside down environment of offshore banking, the assets of criminal organizations are protected by the criminal code.

And under this protection they have flourished. The magnitude of offshore banking is overwhelming and ultimately unknown since much of the money deposited is unreported. The US investment bank, Merrill Lynch, conservatively estimates the wealth of private individuals managed through private banking accounts in offshore tax havens at \$3.3 trillion.²¹ The IMF puts the offshore assets of corporations and individuals at \$5.5 trillion, a sum equivalent to 25 percent of total world income.²² The largely ill-gotten loot of Third World elites in numbered accounts is placed at \$600 billion, with one-third of that held in Switzerland.²³

But although Switzerland remains the traditional favorite, with more than 40 percent of offshore wealth stashed away in its non-resident bank accounts,²⁴ it has plenty of competitors for both legal and illegal wealth. The tiny Cayman Islands — with more banks and registered trust companies than people — is the fifth largest banking center in the world.²⁵ Jersey, only one of the tax-sheltering British Channel Islands off the Normandy coast, has \$140 billion in bank deposits.²⁶ The Cook Islands, Bermuda, and Cayman are approved by the Hong Kong Securities and Futures Commission for the incorporation of companies listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.²⁷ In the British Virgin Islands, which falls under UK legal ju-

risdiction, there are 130,000 registered "international business companies" protected by complete confidentiality and anonymity.²⁸

Not only bankers, but also currency dealers and institutional fund managers handling pension funds and mutual funds use offshore facilities.²⁹ With the deregulation that marked the 1980s, the Caribbean centers came to play a major role in Euro-currency dealings through registered subsidiaries of US banks.³⁰ The large insurance companies use their "offshore umbrellas" to help corporations establish "captive subsidiaries" which receive insurance premiums "to cover the parent's risk exposure."³¹ Corporations and criminals alike use them to "recycle their profits" to a variety of business activities including high risk investments and "hot money deposits" in the peripheral stock markets of Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe. In this way, "black" and "dirty" money are routinely transformed into "hot" money, which largely consists of highly speculative short-term deposits — often managed by the large institutional investors.

The effect of these offshore havens is massive tax evasion, vast corporate cash reserves in the form of tax-free black money, and a level of capital flight that leaves already teetering and debt-ridden national economies devastated and unable to function. This critical drain of billions of dollars in capital flight dramatically reduces state tax revenues, paralyzes social programs, drives up budget deficits, and spurs the accumulation of large public debts.

Global Debt, Drugs, and Economic Medicine

The role of illicit trade and money laundering in exacerbating the problems of national debt is particularly strong. The plunge in world commodity prices and the resulting debt crisis of the early 1980s contributed to decimating export revenues in developing countries. Then, as debt mounted further, international creditors imposed harsh austerity measures such as laying off public employees, auctioning state industry, freezing public investment, and curtail-

28. *Ibid.*

29. Most of the financial actors in the Channel Islands offshore centers and the Isle of Man, for instance, are an offshoot of London High Street banks.

30. See Blum and Bloch, *op. cit.*, p. 75.

31. The Isle of Man has become an important center for the offshore insurance business. See Gartland, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

19. Russell Mokhiber, "Amex's Dirty Money," *Multinational Monitor*, Dec. 1994.

20. John Evans, *The Proceeds of Crime*, International Centre for Criminal Law Reform, Vancouver, 1994.

21. See "Increased Demand Transforms Markets," *Financial Times*, June 21, 1995, p. 2.

22. Stephen Fidler, "Bahamas: Investment Raises Hopes," *Financial Times*, June 7, 1996, p. 3.

23. See Peter Bosshard, "Cracking the Swiss Banks," *Multinational Monitor*, Nov. 1992.

24. Richard Waters, "Survey of International Private Banking," *Financial Times*, June 21, 1995, p. 5.

25. Estimate by Jack A. Blum presented at *Jornadas: Drogas, desarrollo y estado de derecho*, Bilbao, Oct. 1994; also Blum and Alan Bloch, "Le blanchiment de l'argent dans les Antilles," in Alain Labrousse and Alain Wallon, eds., *La planète des drogues* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1993).

26. According to figures published by the States Financial Services Department of Jersey, deposits rose to 90 billion pounds (\$140 billion). Press Release, May 13, 1996.

27. See Peter Gartland, "Offshore Companies," *Investment International*, n. 106, Mar. 1995, p. 75.

ing credit to farmers and industrialists. The resultant rampant unemployment and fall of real wages sent the "legal economy" into crisis.

The simultaneous collapse of exports and domestic markets created a vacuum in the economic system which allowed a dramatic expansion of the underground economy. In many countries, illicit production became the leading sector of the economy, the main source of foreign exchange, and fertile ground for the criminal mafias. In Bolivia, the IMF-sponsored New Economic Policy (NEP), first adopted in 1985, contributed to the demise of mineral exports and to massive lay-offs by the state mining consortium COMIBOL. With no jobs in sight, fired miners used their severance pay to invest in the coca producing areas, thereby boosting the narcotics trade.

Similarly, the "economic stabilization" and structural adjustment program in Peru under President Alberto Fujimori wreaked economic and social havoc. The August 1990 "Fujishock" — which included a 30-fold increase in fuel prices from one day to the next — drove farmers who had been scraping by with low-profit crops such as coffee, maize, and tobacco to switch to coca cultivation. According to the UN, "syndicate inroads were facilitated by the structural adjustment programs which debt-ridden countries were obliged to accept in order to receive loans from the International Monetary Fund."³²

The strong correlation between debt pressures and an increase in organized criminal activity is not limited to the Latin American and Asian drug triangles. In Africa, when trade barriers were lifted and European and US grain surpluses were dumped on the domestic market, local agricultural production plummeted. As food self-

sufficiency declined and external debt rose, many farmers started growing cannabis. In Morocco, foreign exchange from hashish (kif) cultivation now equals the combined earnings of all the country's legal agricultural exports.³³ In Côte d'Ivoire, cocoa farmers are moving into ganja, a local variety of marijuana with excellent export potential. In several African countries, the drug mafias have also made significant inroads into local politics.

The pattern repeats in the former Soviet bloc. The "strong economic medicine" imposed by external creditors has contributed to an extensive criminal economy which feeds on poverty and economic dislocation. In the Ukraine, for instance,

33. Pascual Morteno Torgoso, "Kif Cultivation has taken off with National Debt," *Interdependences*, Mar. 1996.

the IMF-sponsored "shock treatment" applied in October 1994 wreaked havoc: The price of bread increased overnight by 300 percent, electricity prices by 600 percent, and public transportation by 900 percent. Combined with the lifting of subsidies and the freeze on credit, the reforms have contributed to undermining Ukraine's breadbasket economy.³⁴ With trade liberalization, the door has also been opened to the dumping of US grain surpluses and "food aid" on the domestic market, contributing to destabilizing one of the world's largest and most productive wheat economies. The Paris-based Geopolitical Drug Watch confirmed that as wheat production in the Ukraine fell, illegal opium cultivation increased rapidly. The dynamic is the same in the former Yugoslavia, where

local agriculture is being supplanted by poppy cultivation and heroin manufacture controlled by the Italian Sacro Corona Unita mafia.³⁵

As countries fall deeper in debt and legal industries and agriculture collapse under the brunt of the structural adjustment programs, annual interest payments can exceed total legal export earnings. Under these circumstances, income from illicit trade is the only available source of essential foreign exchange, and creditors and debtors alike share a vested financial interest in the uninterrupted flow of lucrative contraband. In Latin America's "narco-democracies," as well as in Pakistan, they cooperate to recycle billions of "narco-dollars" through the banking system to meet the demands of creditors.

In the early 1990s in Peru, the Central Bank, through informal exchange dealers operating on street corners in down-



Many small farmers who used to grow food for their families and villages have been forced by global economic pressures to switch to illicit drug cultivation or to relocate in already overcrowded cities.

34. See Chrystia Freeland, "Ukraine and IMF Agree on Initial Deal over Economic Reform," *Financial Times*, Sept. 24-25, 1994; and M. Kaminski, "Kuchma Plans Big Reforms for Ukraine," *Financial Times*, Oct. 12, 1994.

35. See *La dépêche internationale des drogues*, n. 46, July 1996, p. 3.

32. UN World Summit for Social Development, *Crime Goes Global* (N.Y.: UN Department of Public Information), p. 2.

town Lima, purchased an average of 8 million narco-dollars a day. This money had been earmarked for the servicing of Peru's external debt.

Latin American governments also used revenues from the drug economy to buy arms and to prop up their military establishments. In several countries, factions within the military have connections to the drug trade. In a curious irony, according to the Washington Office on Latin America (WOLA), "US narcotics efforts have the harmful side effect of forging even closer US ties with abusive police and military forces."³⁶

Privatization Programs Playing Favorites

Many Western and Japanese commercial banks stepped into openings created by the privatization and debt restructuring programs to pick up state assets and public land "at a good price." They have also scooped up state banks in Latin America and Eastern Europe, many of which were known to be involved in the laundering of dirty money. In Hungary, for instance, the Central European International Bank (CIB) was acquired by a consortium of foreign banks including Banca Commerciale Italiana, Bayerische Vereinsbank A. G., the Long-term Credit Bank of Japan, the Sakura Bank, and the Société Générale.³⁷ CIB has full freedom to enter the lucrative business of moving money back and forth without government interference or compliance with foreign exchange rules. A 1992 court case in Luxembourg confirmed that the Cali Cartel used CIB to transfer money. In the words of the Hungarian Drug Brigade, "with this country's economic problems and need for liquid assets, one cannot ask the government to look too hard at the origin of the money deposited in her banks."³⁸

In Bolivia and Peru, IMF-guided reforms to the banking system have facilitated a free flow of currency in and out of the country. Said one observer, "This amounts to nothing less than the legalization of money laundering by the Peruvian financial system."³⁹ And indeed,

given the devastated above-ground economy, the laundering of drug money is probably what made Peruvian banks profitable in the first place.

In Latin America, many of the privatized state banks are now under the control of European and US banking interests. An example is the case of Interbanc, a Peruvian State bank acquired in 1994 by Darby Overseas, a company owned by Nicholas Brady, former treasury secretary under the Bush administration. According to the *Financial Times*, Darby Overseas "is to invest in Peru's commercial banking sector, rated a high risk while it awaits a Brady plan to reschedule its debt. ... Darby Overseas was set up a year ago [1993] by Mr. Brady, his chief aide at the Treasury Mr. Hollis McLoughlin, and Mr. Daniel Marx, [former] Argentine finance under-secretary. ... The prime mover behind IFH, constituted to bid for Interbanc, is Mr. Carlos Pastor, Peru's economy minister in the early 1980s."⁴⁰

In Russia, the privatization programs have unequivocally favored the transfer of a significant slice of state property to organized crime. Not surprisingly, the Russian mafias, which constitute a new property-owning class, have championed the "free market" and fervently supported President Boris Yeltsin's economic reforms. They have also backed his July 1996 re-election campaign. They, along with the former Soviet *nomenklatura*, have moved billions of dollars in "black" and "dirty money" to offshore hideaways. Some of that money has returned to Russia to buy state enterprises and public land. Luxembourg and the British Virgin Islands are respectively ranked third and fourth among Russia's "foreign investors."⁴¹ Not only are the Russian mafias involved, but Western criminal organizations — often through an institutional investor — have channeled money toward the "emerging financial markets" in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, where the shares of privatized state enterprises have been put on the auction block.

With a grip on politicians and state officials and their representatives in the legislature, the more than 1,300 organized criminal groups in the Russian Federation have the clout to impose

"democracy" and shape economic policy to their advantage.⁴² They also wield considerable financial influence. According to a recently published study by the Russian Academy of Sciences, organized crime controls more than 40 percent of the Russian economy, half of Moscow's commercial real estate, two-thirds of commercial institutions; in total some 35,000 businesses, nearly 400 banks, and 150 government-owned enterprises.⁴³ A section of the Russian syndicates is also involved in sales of nuclear, space, and defense-related material, including guided missiles and plutonium for bombs and conventional weaponry.⁴⁴

Lies and Consequences

Global crime has become an integral part of an economic system, with far reaching social, economic, and geopolitical ramifications. The proceeds of the criminal economy are used to repay international creditors; legal and illegal undertakings are increasingly intertwined, the dividing line between "businesspeople" and criminals is blurred.

In turn, the relationship among criminals, politicians, and members of the intelligence establishment has tainted the structures of the state and the role of its institutions. Capital flight, massive tax evasion and money laundering, sanctioned by the global market system, are among the main causes of public debt and rising budget deficits. The criminalization of the banking system drains resources from the production of necessary consumer goods and channels capital toward a skewed luxury goods economy (e.g., high-income services, resort hotels, real estate, etc.) which serves the interests of a wealthy minority.

Meanwhile, the international financial community turns a blind eye until some scandal momentarily breaks through the gilded surface. They see money laundering and the acquisition of state property by organized crime under the privatization programs as lesser evils that help governments pay

(continued on p. 54)

36. Coletta Youngers, "The Andean Quagmire, Rethinking US Drug Control Efforts in the Andes," WOLA Briefing Series, Washington, DC, Mar. 1996, p. 1.

37. See Alain Labrousse, "A Banking System of the Money Laundering School," *Interdependences*, Mar. 1996, p. 9.

38. *Ibid.*

39. Humberto Campodonico, "The Swallows Capital Pays the External Debt," *Interdependences*, Mar. 1996, p. 13.

40. Sally Bowen, "Brady Investment in Peru," *Financial Times*, July 22, 1994.

41. *The Banker* (London), Apr. 1995, p. 38.

42. *Kommersant*, n. 20, Moscow, 1994.

43. The study indicates that the Russian mafia controls from 35 to 80 percent of the voting shares in various financial institutions with country-wide activities. See *Izvestiya*, Sept. 21, 1995; Paul Klebnikov, "Stalin's Heirs," *Forbes*, Sept. 1993, pp. 124-34; and Brandt, *op cit.*

44. See *The Observer* (London), Sept. 11, 1994, p. 6.

George Bush Takes Charge:

The Uses of "Counter-Terrorism"

A paper trail of declassified documents from the Reagan-Bush era yields valuable information on how counter-terrorism provided a powerful mechanism for solidifying Bush's power base and launching a broad range of national security initiatives.

by Christopher Simpson

During the Reagan years, George Bush used "crisis management" and "counter-terrorism" as vehicles for running key parts of the clandestine side of the US government.

Bush proved especially adept at plausible denial. Some measure of his skill in avoiding responsibility can be taken from the fact that even after the Iran-Contra affair blew the Reagan administration apart, Bush went on to become the "foreign policy president," while CIA Director William Casey, by then conveniently dead, took most of the blame for a number of covert foreign policy debacles that Bush had set in motion.

THE WHITE HOUSE WASHINGTON	
December 14, 1981	
UNCLASSIFIED	
NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION DIRECTIVE NUMBER 3	
<u>CRISIS MANAGEMENT</u>	
A national security matter for which Presidential decisions and implementing instructions are required more rapidly than routine interdepartment NSC staff support provides may be considered in the context of crisis management.	
<u>SPECIAL SITUATION GROUP (SSG)</u>	
Crisis management shall be the responsibility of a Special Situation Group (SSG) chaired by the Vice President.	
The function of the SSG will be to advise the President with respect to decision options on domestic, foreign and military policies and actions.	
UNCLASSIFIED	
3/16/90 Partially Declassified/Released on order pursuant to E.O. 12356 by S. Tiley, National Security Council	

[DOCUMENT CENSORED BY NSC]

Christopher Simpson is professor in the School of Communications at American University and author of *Blowback*, *The Splendid Blond Beast*, *Science of Coercion*, and of *National Security Directives of the Reagan and Bush Administrations* from which this article was adapted.

The trail of National Security Decision Directives (NSDDs) left by the Reagan administration begins to tell the story. True, much remains classified, and still more was never committed to paper in the first place. Even so, the main picture is clear: As vice president, George Bush was at the center of secret wars, political murders, and America's convoluted oil politics in the Middle East.

The Reagan-era National Security Council (NSC) used NSDDs to formulate high-level policy on political and military matters. The directives ranged from presidential orders for testing nuclear weapons to negotiating strategies for US representatives at various international summits.

Reagan and the NSC also used NSDDs to settle conflicts among security agencies over bureaucratic turf and lines of command. It is through that prism that we see the first glimmers of Vice President Bush's role in clandestine operations during the 1980s.

NSDD 3 CRISIS MANAGEMENT

(CONFIDENTIAL, SANITIZED VERSION), DEC. 14, 1981

When the Reagan administration began, Secretary of State Alexander Haig tried to write a large "crisis management" role for himself into draft presidential orders. Bush and NSC Adviser Richard Allen blocked the maneuver.

After Reagan was wounded in an assassination attempt in early 1981, Bush engineered NSC approval for an inter-agency crisis management committee that reported to him. The working assumption was that Reagan would leave the difficult decisions to Bush and the NSC, which would assume de facto presidential powers during a crisis, including the authority to wage war or to declare martial law.

Haig, who was on the NSC, later wrote that he first learned of the vice president's move from a newspaper report.¹

The Crisis Management Group was the first of a series of names for a senior deputies' committee through which the vice president handled crisis management, covert operations, and particularly sensitive foreign policy initiatives. Later names for substantially the same committee included the Special Situations Group, Crisis Pre-Planning Group, Planning and Coordinating Group, and the Policy Review Group. (left)

NSDD 30. MANAGING TERRORIST INCIDENTS,
APRIL 10, 1982



During the Reagan-Bush years, "terrorism" was a label that could be applied to tactics of almost any opposition group who would not play by White House rules. By taking on administrative responsibility for dealing with terrorism, Bush extended his administrative turf to include almost every aspect of clandestine security policy. (right)

Extract of NSDD 138

The U. S Government considers the practice of terrorism by any person or group in any cause a threat to our national security and will resist the use of terrorism by all legal means available.

Terrorism is a common problem for all democratic nations. We will work intensively with others to eliminate the threat of terrorism to our way of life. States that practice terrorism or actively support it, will not be allowed to do so without consequence. All available channels of communication will be used to persuade those now practicing or supporting terrorism to desist. Assistance and support shall be provided to those democratic nations suffering intimidation because of terrorist threats or activities.

State-sponsored terrorist activity or directed threats of such action are considered to be hostile acts and the U.S. will hold sponsors accountable. Whenever we have evidence that a state is mounting or intends to conduct an act of terrorism against us, we have a responsibility to take measure to protect our citizens, property, and interests.

Intelligence collection against groups and states involved in international terrorism must be improved in order to better prevent or counter attacks; warn our citizens, friends, and allies; and, thereby reduce the risk to them.

Acts of state-sponsored and organized terrorism should be appropriately exposed and condemned in ever available forum.

Secure expeditious passage of legislative instruments to implement the provisions of extant international accord on terrorism to which the United States is signatory.

Carry out appropriate bilateral and multilateral exchanges leading toward improved cooperation on combatting terrorism.

Develop a program for expanding existing sanctions against those organizations or states which support or export terrorism.

Departments and agencies with personnel in areas vulnerable to terrorist action shall pursue mandatory programs for improved awareness and security training.

(DOCUMENT CENSORED BY NSC)

UNCLASSIFIED

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

April 10, 1982

UNCLASSIFIED

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION
DIRECTIVE NUMBER 30

MANAGING TERRORIST INCIDENTS

The United States is committed, as a matter of national policy, to oppose terrorism domestically and internationally. Efficient and effective management of terrorist incidents is crucial to this commitment. Successful management of terrorist incidents requires a rapid, effective response, immediate access to institutional expertise, and extensive prior planning. Because of these requirements, the management of terrorist incidents of duration will be handled in the following manner:

- (1) **Responsibilities.** If the gravity of a terrorist incident situation warrants, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, at the direction of the Vice President, will convene the Special Situation Group (SSG) to advise the President with respect to decision options on appropriate policies and actions.
- (2) **The Lead Agency.** The coordination of federal response to terrorist incidents will normally be the responsibility of the Lead Agency. The Lead Agency will be that agency with the most direct operational role in dealing with the particular terrorist incident at hand. It will coordinate all operational aspects of the incident, including press and intelligence. The Lead Agency will normally be:
 - The State Department, for international terrorist incidents that take place outside of US territory.
 - The Department of Justice for terrorist incidents which take place within US territory. Unless otherwise specified by the Attorney General, the FBI will be the Lead Agency within the Department of Justice for operational response to such incidents.
 - The FAA for hijackings within the special jurisdiction of the United States.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will be responsible for planning for and managing the public health aspects of a terrorist incident and recovery from the consequences of such incidents.

UNCLASSIFIED

(EXCERPT)

**NSDD 138. PREEMPTIVE STRIKES
AGAINST SUSPECTED TERRORISTS,**

(DECLASSIFIED FRAGMENT; CLASSIFICATION LEVEL OF ORIGINAL TEXT NOT DISCLOSED), POSSIBLE DATE APRIL 3, 1984

On March 16, 1984, Islamic guerrillas kidnapped William Buckley, CIA chief of station in Beirut. One result was presidential authorization of NSDD 138, a de facto US declaration of war against Islamic guerrilla groups in the Middle East and Northern Africa.

The still-classified portions of the directive authorized establishing secret FBI and CIA paramilitary squads and use of existing Pentagon military units such as the Green Berets and Navy SEALs for conducting what amounted to guerrilla war against guerrillas.² It authorized sabotage, killing (though not "assassination"), preemptive and retaliatory raids, deception, and a significantly expanded intelligence collection program aimed at suspected radicals and people regarded as sympathizers. ("Assassination," in CIA parlance, referred to the murder of heads of state and was barred by a presidential order first issued during the Ford administration. Killing suspected guerrillas and lower-level state officials, in contrast, was regarded as "preemptive self-defense.") The order placed special stress on campaigns against Iran, Libya, Syria, Cuba, Nicaragua, North Korea, and the USSR.

The NSC has thus far released only a one-page "extract" of sentences from this original order. Other portions of the directive, however, were made public in the form of a Presidential Message to Congress and associated statements to the media. (left)

U.S. POLICY ON THE IRAN-IRAQ WAR, MAY-JUNE 1984?
USE OF U.S. MILITARY TO KEEP THE STRAIT OF HORMUZ
OPEN TO OIL TANKER TRAFFIC, MAY-JUNE 1984?

An unnamed "senior [Reagan] administration official" revealed the existence of these presidential directives to the *Washington Post* during a 1987 interview, when they were cited as the basis for the administration's decision to protect Kuwaiti oil tankers passing through the Strait of Hormuz during the Iran-Iraq war.

The US "tilted" toward Iraq in its war with Iran. It prepared contingency plans for aiding Iraq and other Persian Gulf states in a confrontation with Iran or uprising by domestic Islamic militants.³ In a broader sense, the two directives set the stage for the Bush administration's transfer of military equipment and satellite intelligence to Iraq prior to its invasion of Kuwait.

CLASSIFIED,
(NO TEXT AVAILABLE)

CLASSIFIED,
(NO TEXT AVAILABLE)

LEGAL PROTECTIONS FOR CLANDESTINE KILLING
TEAMS, NOV. 13, 1984

Shortly after President Reagan's landslide reelection victory, CIA Director William Casey met with the president in the White House to convince him to authorize intelligence findings and a directive to implement the anti-guerrilla campaign outlined in NSDD 138. Casey's draft NSDD was designed to provide legal guarantees to US field officers and foreign strike teams that would protect them from punishment for activities that would otherwise violate US law or the Executive Order that nominally bars US agencies from participating in assassinations. White House officials later called this new directive "a license to kill" and a "go anywhere, do anything" authority to combat guerrillas viewed as hostile to the US.⁴

The directive indicated that actions taken "in good faith" by US agents conducting authorized anti-guerrilla operations "must be and are deemed" lawful. The ambiguous wording insisted on legal acts, yet paradoxically "deemed" anti-terrorist acts to be legal in advance. The first "pre-emptive self defense" teams were to be created in Lebanon, then expanded into other countries with an initial budget of about \$1 million.

The accompanying intelligence findings approved CIA and US military programs to recruit and train clandestine death squads in about a

dozen countries, including Lebanon and Honduras. In at least one case, a US-sponsored Lebanese Christian militia killing squad undertook what was later described as an "unauthorized" bombing aimed at an Islamic fundamentalist religious leader linked to the bombing of the US Marine barracks in Beirut. On March 8, 1985, the Lebanese killing team bombed the apartment building of Islamic fundamentalist Mohammed Hussein Fadlallah, killing 80 and wounding 256, many of whom were schoolchildren from a nearby academy. Fadlallah was not injured. After considerable publicity, White House officials told the *Washington Post* that the NSC had approved creation of the Lebanese team, but that the bombing was unauthorized. The CIA was said to have "rescinded" the project after the bombing.⁵



UNCLASSIFIED

EXEMPT
NSC 102-1

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

January 13, 1985

SENSITIVE

TOP SECRET/VEIL

National Security Decision
Directive Number 159
Dec 10, 84
2356
by Council

COVERT ACTION POLICY APPROVAL
AND COORDINATION PROCEDURES (TS)

The US faces a variety of threats to its national security interests as well as opportunities to advance those interests. Among these threats are the overt and covert efforts of hostile powers to influence and control international organizations, governments, and certain non-governmental groups throughout the world. In particular the Soviet Bloc and terrorist organizations continue to intervene in the internal affairs of both democratic and non-democratic countries and to use any means considered effective to achieve their ends. These include covert political action and propaganda and paramilitary and intelligence support programs to assist their allies and damage their opponents, including actions to subvert democratic elections, organize and support coups d'etat, terrorism, insurgencies, and spread disinformation designed to discredit the US and its allies. (TS)

While the US will not make use of most of the techniques employed by our adversaries, we must be prepared to counter such efforts and to assist our allies and friends in resisting these threats. The US requires a range of national security tools to protect and advance its interests. When the President determines that it is appropriate, he must have at his disposal appropriate means to assist allies and friends and to influence the actions of foreign countries, including the means to affect behavior both when the US wishes to acknowledge its role, and to do this covertly when the revelation of US sponsorship, support, or assistance would adversely affect US interests. These tools include overt and covert diplomatic information channels, political action, and covert action including paramilitary and intelligence support programs. (TS)

To ensure that all means are considered and utilized effectively to serve policy purposes, there is a need to review fully and integrate covert with overt activities. Covert action must be consistent with and supportive of national policy and must be placed appropriately within a national security policy framework. Covert action must never be used as a substitute for policy. The National Security Council must coordinate all of the instruments of US national security, and the President must decide which purposes can best be accomplished by covert action. (TS)

TOP SECRET/VEIL

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AKW042435

(EXCERPT)

UNCLASSIFIED

TOP SECRET/VEIL

of Notification. However, the provision of routine support in the form of personnel, funds, equipment, supplies, transportation, training, logistics, and facilities by Government components other than CIA to support a covert action shall not in itself be considered a separate covert action by the supplying agency. (TS)

3. Memorandum of Notification (MON). The MON is the means by which CIA or other designated components seek approval for a substantial change or modification in the means of implementation, resource level, other change in assets or level of activity, or when there has been a significant change in the operational conditions or risks associated with a covert action program. The President shall approve all such modifications to existing covert action findings. All such changes must be within the scope of authorities granted by an existing Presidential Finding. MONs shall not be used to exceed the limits authorized in the finding or to modify objectives, targets, or add foreign states, organizations, or individuals of countries other than those authorized in the finding. The MON shall also be used to request cancellation or suspension of a finding for which action has been completed, which has been bypassed by events, or which, for other reasons, should be cancelled. (TS)

National Security Planning Group (NSPG)

The National Security Planning Group, as a committee of the National Security Council, shall provide a recommendation to the President on each proposed covert action or proposed modification to an ongoing covert action. (TS)

1. For consideration of covert action, the NSPG shall consist of the following members:

The President
The Vice President
The Secretary of State
The Secretary of Defense
Counselor to the President
The Director of Central Intelligence
Chief of Staff to the President
Deputy Chief of Staff to the President
Assistant to the President for
National Security Affairs
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff

AKW042435

The Attorney General and the Director, Office of Management and Budget, and others as appropriate, shall attend NSPG meetings for covert action consideration. (TS)

2. The NSPG is the component of the National Security Council authorized to establish, review, evaluate, provide guidance for and direction to the conduct of covert action and

TOP SECRET/VEIL

UNCLASSIFIED

(EXCERPT)

NSDD 159. MANAGEMENT OF U.S. COVERT OPERATIONS, (TOP SECRET/VEIL — SENSITIVE), JAN. 18, 1985

The Reagan administration's commitment to significantly expand covert operations had been clear since before the 1980 election. How such operations were actually to be managed from day to day, however, was considerably less certain. The management problem became particularly knotty owing to legal requirements to notify congressional intelligence oversight committees of covert operations, on the one hand, and the tacitly accepted presidential mandate to deceive those same committees concerning sensitive operations such as the Contra war in Nicaragua, on the other.

The solution attempted in NSDD 159 was to establish a small coordinating committee headed by Vice President George Bush through which all information concerning US covert operations was to be funneled. The order also established a cate-

gory of top secret information known as *Veil*, to be used exclusively for managing records pertaining to covert operations.⁶ The system was designed to keep circulation of written records to an absolute minimum while at the same time ensuring that the vice president retained the ability to coordinate US covert operations with the administration's overt diplomacy and propaganda.

Only eight copies of NSDD 159 were created. The existence of the vice president's committee was itself highly classified. The directive became public as a result of the criminal prosecutions of Oliver North, John Poindexter, and others involved in the Iran-Contra affair, hence the designation "Exhibit A" running up the left side of the document.

U.S. STRATEGY FOR IRAN AFTER KHOMEINI,
JUNE 1985 (NOT OFFICIALLY ADOPTED, TOP SECRET) AND
COVERT ACTION FINDING REGARDING IRAN,
(TOP SECRET), JAN. 17, 1986

This draft NSDD, drawn up primarily by NSC staffer Howard Teicher, illustrated the political splits within the Reagan NSC that eventually gave rise to the Iran-Contra crisis.

According to the Tower Commission report, Teicher synthesized this draft order from a Special National Intelligence Estimate on Iran and a CIA study of potential covert operations against the Khomeini government. The draft authorized "the supply of Western military hardware" to Iran and other measures, according to its cover memo.⁷

George Shultz and Caspar Weinberger disapproved, however, killing the draft order. Nevertheless, George Bush, William Casey, and key members of the appropriately named Crisis Pre-Planning Group continued to support the initiative, and secretly implemented it over the next two years.⁸

In January 1986, NSC staffer Oliver North drew up a formal Covert Action Finding for President Reagan (right). It authorized the CIA and NSC staff to proceed with the controversial effort to transfer US weapons to Iranian "moderates" in exchange for their cooperation in freeing US hostages in Lebanon. In effect, the finding implemented the program that had been outlined in the rejected NSDD, but without the approval of Shultz, Weinberger, and congressional intelligence committees. The handwriting at the bottom includes Reagan's initials and a note by security adviser Poindexter indicating that the "President was verbally briefed from this paper. VP [Vice President Bush], Don Regan [presidential chief of staff] and Don Fortier [Poindexter's deputy and focal point for covert operations on Bush's Planning and Coordinating Group] were present."⁹ In later testimony, President Reagan insisted that he had not understood the content of the North/Poindexter Finding memo at the time he approved it.

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
January 17, 1986

N 10046

EXHIBIT
100-16

ACTION

MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT

FROM: JOHN M. POINDEXTER

SUBJECT: Covert Action Finding Regarding Iran

Prime Minister Peres of Israel secretly dispatched his special advisor on terrorism with instructions to propose a plan by which Israel, with limited assistance from the U.S., can create conditions to help bring about a more moderate government in Iran. The Israelis are very concerned that Iran's deteriorating position in the war with Iraq, the potential for further radicalization in Iran, and the possibility of enhanced Soviet influence in the Gulf all pose significant threats to the security of Israel. They believe it is essential that they act to at least preserve a balance of power in the region.

The Israeli plan is premised on the assumption that moderate elements in Iran can come to power if these factions demonstrate their credibility in defending Iran against Iraq and in deterring Soviet intervention. To achieve the strategic goal of a more moderate Iranian government, the Israelis are prepared to unilaterally commence selling military materiel to Western-oriented Iranian factions. It is their belief that by so doing they can achieve a heretofore unobtainable penetration of the Iranian governing hierarchy. The Israelis are convinced that the Iranians are so desperate for military materiel, expertise and intelligence that the provision of these resources will result in favorable long-term changes in personnel and attitudes within the Iranian government. Further, once the exchange relationship has commenced, a dependency would be established on those who are providing the requisite resources, thus allowing the provider(s) to coercively influence near-term events. Such an outcome is consistent with our policy objectives and would present significant advantages for U.S. national interests. As described by the Prime Minister's emissary, the only requirement the Israelis have is an assurance that they will be allowed to purchase U.S. replenishments for the stocks that they sell to Iran. We have researched the legal problems of Israel's selling U.S. manufactured arms to Iran. Because of the requirement in U.S. law for recipients of U.S. arms to notify the U.S. government of transfers to third countries, I do not recommend that you agree with the specific details of the Israeli plan. However, there is another possibility. Some time ago Attorney

RECEIVED

Declassify on: OADR

full text returned 11/14/87

NOV 29 1986

TOP SECRET

CONFIDENTIAL

UNCLASSIFIED

NSC/ICS 4026

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

TOP SECRET

**NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION
DIRECTIVE**

U.S. Policy Toward Iran

Dynamic political evolution is taking place inside Iran. Instability caused by the pressures of the Iraq-Iran war, economic deterioration and regime infighting create the potential for major changes in Iran. The Soviet Union is better positioned than the U.S. to exploit and benefit from any power struggle the results in changes in the Iranian regime, as well as increasing socio-political pressures. In this environment, the emergence of a regime more compatible with American and Western interests is unlikely. Soviet success in taking advantage of the emerging power struggle to insinuate itself in Iran would change the strategic balance in the area.

While we pursue a number of broad, long-term goals, our primary short-term challenge must be to block Moscow's efforts to increase Soviet influence (now and after the death of Khomeini). This will require an active and sustained program to build both our leverage and our understanding of the internal situation so as to enable us to exert a greater and more constructive influence over Iranian politics. We must improve our ability to protect our interests during the struggle for succession.

U.S. Interests and Goals

The most immediate U.S. interests include:

- (1) Preventing the disintegration of Iran and preserving it as an independent strategic buffer which separates the Soviet Union from the Persian Gulf;

The Israelis have asked for our urgent response to this proposal so that they can plan accordingly. They note that conditions inside both Iran and Lebanon are highly volatile. The Israelis are cognizant that this entire operation will be terminated if the Iranians abandon their goal of moderating their government or allow further acts of terrorism. You have discussed the general outlines of the Israeli plan with Secretaries Shultz and Weinberger, Attorney General Meese and Director Casey. The Secretaries do not recommend you proceed with this plan. Attorney General Meese and Director Casey believe the short-term and long-term objectives of the plan warrant the policy risks involved and recommend you approve the attached finding. Because of the extreme sensitivity of this project, it is recommended that you exercise your statutory prerogative to withhold notification of the finding to the Congressional oversight committees until such time that you deem it to be appropriate.

Recommendation

OK NO

That you sign the attached finding.

Prepared by:
Oliver L. North

Attachment
Tab A - Covert Action Finding

Printed was briefed verbally from this paper.
VP, Don Regan and Don Fortier were present.

(EXCERPTS)

NSDD 179. TASK FORCE ON COMBATting TER- RORISM, (CONFIDENTIAL), JULY 20, 1985

In June 1985, Islamic fundamentalist guerrillas hijacked TWA Flight 847, took more than 150 hostages, and began a highly publicized, 17-day series of negotiations with US officials. Despite a public commitment from President Reagan that "America will never make concessions to terrorists," the confrontation ended with an agreement by the US and Israel to release hundreds of Lebanese Shiite prisoners in exchange for the TWA passengers.¹⁰

The existing US policy of preemptive strikes against suspected terrorists (NSDD 138) had not been properly implemented because of sluggish bureaucracies in the US and indecision among US allies, at least as Reagan, Shultz, Casey, and other prominent officials saw things.

This directive again appointed Bush to serve as the administration's coordinator for all major decisions concerning "terrorism," and to develop strategy and tactics for "preemptive or retaliatory actions to combat terrorism" that could garner international support.¹¹ This order was classified "Confidential," indicating that it was designed for circulation throughout the government. (below)

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
UNCLASSIFIED
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SYSTEM II
90763

INCLASSIFIED
CONFIDENTIAL

July 20, 1985

National Security
Decision Directive 179

TASK FORCE ON COMBATting TERRORISM

International terrorism poses an increasing threat to U.S. citizens and our interests. Terrorists are waging a war against, not only the United States, but all civilized society in which innocent civilians are intentional victims and our servicemen are specific targets. (X)

The United States Government has an obligation to protect its citizens and interests against terrorists who have so little regard for human life and the values we cherish. To the extent we can, we should undertake action in concert with other nations which share our democratic institutions to combat the menace of terrorism. We must, however, be prepared to act unilaterally when necessary. It is, therefore, imperative that we develop a sustained program for combatting terrorism. (X)

To ensure that all appropriate resources of the United States Government are dedicated to this task, the Vice President is appointed to convene a government-wide task force on combatting terrorism. (X)

The Vice President's task force will:

- review and evaluate the effectiveness of current U.S. policy and programs on combatting terrorism, to include:
 - an assessment of national priorities currently assigned to effectively combat terrorism, especially earlier recommendations regarding organization in NSDD-30 and adequacy of intelligence responsibilities in NSDD-138 and Presidential Executive Order 12333;
 - the assignment of responsibilities and accountability for ensuring interagency cooperation and coordination before, during, and after a terrorist incident;
 - a review and evaluation of present laws and law enforcement programs dealing with terrorism;
 - the adequacy of public awareness and support;

~~CONFIDENTIAL~~
Declassify: OADR

UNCLASSIFIED
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

11/27/82
BY: [illegible]
[illegible]

(EXCERPT)

NSDD 207. NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR COM- BATting TERRORISM, (TOP SECRET), JAN. 20, 1986



This nine-page directive was the "comprehensive presidential statement of US counter-terrorism policy" in effect during both the Reagan and Bush administrations, according to an NSC deposition filed in US District Court.¹² It formalized the recommendations of Vice President Bush's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism (NSDD 179). Washington's announced policy, both in public forums and in classified orders

such as this one, was that the US government would make "no concessions [to guerrillas] ... pay no ransoms, nor permit release of prisoners or agree to other conditions that could serve to encourage additional terrorism."

In fact, of course, President Reagan, VP Bush, and others had already engineered a series of concessions to secure release of hostages in what would come to be called the Iran-Contra affair.

From the standpoint of broad policy, this directive covered much of the same ground as NSDD 138, signed the previous April. In addition to the "no concessions" pledge, the US government asserted that it would "take measures to protect our citizens" (preemptive action); "make every legal effort to ... prosecute terrorists" (later acknowledged to include seizure of foreign nationals abroad for prosecution in the US); pay substantial rewards for information concerning guerrilla activity;¹³ and ensure that states that support anti-US guerrillas "will not be allowed to do so without consequence."

NSDD 207's innovation lay in its new administrative measures to implement the broad policies. It created an Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program within the government, ordered new restrictions on the Freedom of Information Act, and renewed efforts to pass new emergency powers legislation developed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which would authorize declaration of martial law in the US during "emergencies" announced by the president.

The directive authorized creation of a "proposed organization" within the US government specializing in anti-guerrilla intelligence gathering, paramilitary operations, and rescue techniques. The existence, budget, tactics, leaders, and personnel of the group were intended to remain classified.¹⁴ Other measures included: authorization of an FBI and Immigration and Naturalization Service campaign to review the immigration status of political suspects in the US; preparation of legal arguments designed to justify various US responses to guerrillas, including use of deadly force and unilateral military operations abroad; and creation of specialized tactics, equipment, and squads of trained paramilitary operatives useful for striking at guerrilla targets. (right)

~~TOP SECRET~~

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

SYSTEM II
UNCLASSIFIED

January 20, 1986

~~TOP SECRET~~
UNCLASSIFIED
National Security
Decision Directive Number 207

THE NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR COMBATTING TERRORISM

The Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism has completed an in-depth review of our current policies, capabilities, and resources for dealing with the terrorist threat. I have reviewed the Task Force Report and accompanying recommendations and concluded that our strategy is sound. I have determined that we must enhance our ability to confront this threat and to do so without compromising our basic democratic and human values.

Terrorists undertake criminal acts that involve the use or threat of violence against innocent persons. These acts are premeditated, intended to achieve a political objective through coercion or intimidation of an audience beyond the immediate victims. U.S. citizens and installations, especially abroad, are increasingly being targeted for terrorist acts. Our policy, programs and responses must be effective in ameliorating this threat to our people, property and interests.

Policy

U.S. policy on terrorism is unequivocal: firm opposition to terrorism in all its forms whether it is domestic terrorism perpetrated within U.S. territory, or international terrorism conducted inside or outside U.S. territory by foreign nationals or groups. The policy is based upon the conviction that to accede to terrorist demands places more American citizens at risk. This no-concessions policy is the best way of protecting the greatest number of people and ensuring their safety. At the same time, every available resource will be used to gain the safe return of American citizens who are held hostage by terrorists.

The U.S. Government considers the practice of terrorism by any person or group a potential threat to our national security and will resist the use of terrorism by all legal means available. The United States is opposed to domestic and international terrorism and is prepared to act in concert with other nations or unilaterally when necessary to prevent or respond to terrorist acts.

The entire range of diplomatic, economic, legal, military, paramilitary, covert action, and informational assets at our disposal must be brought to bear against terrorism. To ensure that these measures are fully integrated and mutually supportive, the following interagency groups will assist the Lead Agencies in the coordination of our national program to combat terrorism.

1. The Terrorist Incident Working Group (TIWG). To support the Special Situation Group (SSG -- see NSDD-3) and NSDD-10) during a terrorist incident, a Terrorist Incident Working Group has been established. This group consists of representatives from State, Treasury, DOD, Justice, CIA, JCS, FBI, the Office of the Vice President, and the NSC staff, with augmentation from other agencies as required. The TIWG will be activated by the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs or at the request of any of the members. The NSC staff will provide a senior representative to chair the TIWG, and a staff member to serve as the Executive Director of the TIWG and chair the Operations Sub-Group (OSG) of the TIWG to review ongoing non-crisis operations/activities. The TIWG will normally remain convened for the duration of a terrorist incident. The Ambassador-at-Large for Counter-Terrorism will serve as the Vice Chairman of the TIWG.
2. The Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism (IG/T). The Interdepartmental Group on Terrorism, chaired by the Ambassador-at-Large for Counter-Terrorism, is responsible for the development of overall U.S. policy on terrorism, including, *inter alia*, policy directives, organizational issues, legislative initiatives, interagency training activities, coordinated budget/programs, and policy direction of the Anti-Terrorism Assistance Program. Membership will include all departments and agencies supporting the national program to combat terrorism. Vice Chairmen of the IG/T will be the Department of Justice and the Executive Director of the TIWG.

(EXCERPT, PORTION CENSORED BY NSC)



NSDD. PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AGAINST

LIBYA, (CLASSIFIED, NO TEXT AVAILABLE), AUG. 14, 1986

On August 6, 1986, senior State Department and CIA political officers drew up orders for a clandestine campaign to encourage a "coup or assassination attempt" against Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi. Bush, Shultz, Casey, and Poindexter supported the plan in NSC meetings, contending that even if a coup attempt failed, the resulting confusion would sow mistrust within Libya and keep Qaddafi off balance. The president signed the order on August 14.¹⁵

The campaign had at least three main parts. First, the US used previously scheduled, joint US-Egyptian military exercises to position warships off the Libyan coast. Second, the CIA, NSC, and State Department meanwhile spread rumors through the media that a new US "confrontation" with Libya was imminent, perhaps involving attacks on the seacoast and along the contested Libya-Chad border to the south. The CIA, meanwhile, stepped up covert operations designed to encourage Libyan exiles and dissidents in the military to strike against Qaddafi, while the NSC dispatched US Ambassador Vernon Walters to Europe and Japan on a mission that was to be described in intentional leaks to the press as an effort to drum up international support for the coming "confrontation."

Although the covert operations among Libyan exiles were real enough, the NSC sought to spur a coup against Qaddafi, not invade the country. The CIA and NSC systematically leaked false information to sympathetic reporters abroad and in the US, claiming among other things that the Libyan leader had become sexually impotent and was "off his rocker." Much of the disinformation was reported as fact by television, major newspapers, and even supermarket tabloids.¹⁶

The psychological warfare campaign dramatically self-destructed about a month later. On October 2, the *Washington Post* reported many of the details of the NSC effort against Qaddafi, including the false stories planted in the *Wall Street Journal* and *New York Times*. The resulting loss of media support was to cost the administration dearly a few months later when new information surfaced about US covert operations in Nicaragua and arms trade with Iran.

CLASSIFIED,
(NO TEXT AVAILABLE)



NSDD 286. ADMINISTRATION OF U.S. CLANDESTINE OPERATIONS IN THE WAKE OF IRAN-CONTRA REVELATIONS, (SANITIZED VERSION —

ORIGINAL CLASSIFICATION NOT DISCLOSED),
LATE OCTOBER — EARLY NOVEMBER 1987

This directive, together with NSDD 266 and NSDD 276, sketched out the purported reforms in NSC procedure for management of clandestine operations adopted in the wake of the Iran-Contra and Libyan debacles and the growing realization that President Reagan had become mentally incapacitated. The declassified version of the new procedures required somewhat more rigorous documentation of presidential approval of "special activities" (covert operations) and barred the NSC staff from the "conduct" (but not the management) of special activities.

Beyond that, though, there was little change in the management or the content of US clandestine operations. Some experts contended that NSDD 286 effectively weakened congressional oversight of US covert operations by opening a new loophole that exempted special activities from existing reporting requirements during unspecified "extraordinary circumstances." (right)

I. INTRODUCTION

A. The Policy Context

In discharging his constitutional responsibility for the conduct of foreign relations and for ensuring the security of the United States, the President may find it necessary that activities conducted in support of national foreign policy objectives abroad be planned and executed so that the role of the United States Government is not apparent or acknowledged publicly. Such activities, the failure or exposure of which may entail high costs, must be conducted only after the President reaches an informed judgment regarding their utility in particular circumstances. To the extent possible, they should be conducted only when we are confident that, if they are revealed, the American public would find them sensible.

This Directive... sets forth revised procedures for presidential approval and review, through the National Security Council (NSC) process, of all "special activities" as defined by section 3.4(h) of Executive Order No. 12333 (December 4, 1981).

These procedures are designed, *inter alia*, (1) to ensure that all special activities conducted by, or at the direction of, the United States are consistent with national defense and foreign policies and applicable law; (2) to provide standards ensuring the secrecy of such activities even when the results become publicly known or the activities themselves are the subject of unauthorized disclosure; and (3) to implement section 501 of the National Security Act of 1947, as amended (50 U.S.C. 413), concerning notification to Congress of such activities.

B. The Role of the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs and the National Security Council Staff

Within the framework and in accordance with the requirements set forth in NSDD 266, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs (the "National Security Advisor") shall serve as manager of the NSC process and as principal advisor on the President's staff with respect to all national security affairs, including special activities. The NSC staff, through the Executive Secretary of the NSC, shall assist the National Security Advisor in discharging these responsibilities. The National Security Advisor and the NSC staff themselves shall not undertake the conduct of special activities.

Declassified/Released on 12/15/87
under provisions of E.O. 12356
by D. Sika, National Security Council

Extract from
NSDD 286

UNCLASSIFIED

4. Extraordinary Circumstances

If the President determines that it is necessary, in order to meet rare, extraordinary circumstances, to delay notification until after the initiation of a special activity, the DCI, or head of such other Executive department, agency, or entity authorized to conduct a special activity, shall delay notification consistent with section 501(b) at the direction of the President. Unless the President otherwise directs, not later than two working days after the President signs a Finding or associated MON, if any, the Intelligence Committees shall be notified in accordance with established procedures. In all such cases, notification shall include the reasons for not giving prior notice to the Intelligence Committees. In the event the President directs that notification to Congress be delayed beyond two working days after presidential authorization of a special activity as provided herein, the grounds for such delay shall be memorialized in writing and shall be re-evaluated by the NSPG not less frequently than every ten (10) days.

III. SPECIAL ACTIVITIES NOT CONDUCTED BY THE CIA

If, as provided in section 1.8(e) of Executive Order No. 12333, the President directs that an Executive department, agency or entity other than the CIA conduct a special activity, the provisions of this Directive shall apply to such department, agency, or entity. In such cases, the head of such other Executive department, agency or entity shall fully and currently inform the DCI of all aspects of the special activity, and jointly with the DCI shall notify Congress of the special activity, in accordance with the DCI's role as the President's principal advisor on intelligence matters as set forth in NSDD 266.

(EXCERPT, PORTION CENSORED BY NSC)

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20815

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON
October 2, 1989

UNCLASSIFIED

NATIONAL SECURITY DIRECTIVE 26

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE ATTORNEY GENERAL
THE SECRETARY OF ENERGY
THE DIRECTOR OF THE OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
THE ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT FOR NATIONAL SECURITY AFFAIRS
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
THE CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
THE DIRECTOR, UNITED STATES ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY
THE DIRECTOR, UNITED STATES INFORMATION AGENCY

SUBJECT: U.S. Policy Toward the Persian Gulf ~~SECRET~~

Access to Persian Gulf oil and the security of key friendly states in the area are vital to U.S. national security. The United States remains committed to defend its vital interests in the region, if necessary and appropriate through the use of U.S. military force, against the Soviet Union or any other regional power with interests inimical to our own. The United States also remains committed to support the individual and collective self-defense of friendly countries in the area to enable them to play a more active role in their own defense and thereby reduce the necessity for unilateral U.S. military intervention. The United States also will encourage the effective support and participation of our western allies and Japan to promote our mutual interests in the Persian Gulf region. ~~SECRET~~

Discussion of deployment of United States forces in the Indian Ocean and procedures to be employed in the future to determine force levels in the region.

Iraq

Normal relations between the United States and Iraq would serve our longer-term interests and promote stability in both the Gulf and the Middle East. The United States Government should propose economic and political incentives for Iraq to moderate its behavior and to increase our influence with Iraq. At the same time, the Iraqi leadership must understand that any illegal use of chemical and/or biological weapons will lead to economic and political sanctions, for which we would seek the broadest possible support from our allies and friends. Any breach by Iraq of IAEA safeguards in its nuclear program will result in a similar response. Human rights considerations should continue to be an important element in our policy toward Iraq. In addition, Iraq should be urged to cease its meddling in external affairs, such as in Lebanon, and be encouraged to play a constructive role in negotiating a settlement with Iran and cooperating in the Middle East peace process. ~~SECRET~~

We should pursue, and seek to facilitate, opportunities for U.S. firms to participate in the reconstruction of the Iraqi economy, particularly in the energy area, where they do not conflict with

~~SECRET~~

~~SECRET~~

UNCLASSIFIED

Discussion of United States policy towards another specific country in the Persian Gulf region which sets forth specific aspects of this policy and describes the manner in which all contacts with this country should proceed.

The Soviet Union

The United States should continue to engage the Soviets in a dialogue on regional issues, doing what we can to discourage arms sales and potential meddling in Iran and elsewhere in the region.

Ag Bush

(EXCERPT, PORTION CENSORED BY NSC)

NSD 26. U.S. POLICY TOWARD IRAQ AND THE PERSIAN GULF REGION,

(SANITIZED VERSION; ORIGINAL CLASSIFICATION NOT DISCLOSED), OCT. 2, 1989.

And so the cycle began again. This directive authorized the US government to offer political, economic, and intelligence incentives to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to encourage Iraqi cooperation with the US strategic goal of maintaining control of Persian Gulf oil. President Bush's order encouraged US companies to "participate in the reconstruction of the Iraqi economy" following Iraq's protracted war with Iran, and approved US training of the Iraqi "defense establishment ... on a case by case basis."

The new president's NSDD precipitated a series of policy decisions concerning US aid to Iraq that became highly controversial in the wake of the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in August 1990. Under NSDD 26 and earlier US NSDDs concerning Iraq, the State Department ensured \$1 billion in agriculture credits for Iraq, some of which was diverted into arms purchases; Bush signed a waiver permitting Export-Import Bank loan guarantees for the country despite official censure of Iraq's human rights record; the CIA provided unusually detailed military intelligence to Iraq that its security agencies put to use in a genocidal campaign against Iraq's Kurdish minority group; the Pentagon began efforts to upgrade US-Iraqi military relations; and US export control agencies permitted sale of advanced missile technologies to Iraqi customers, among other measures. US financial relations with Iraq and CIA operations in the country also became entangled in the complex Bank of Credit and Commerce International (BCCI) banking scandal.¹⁷ Most of these activities were highly secret at the time, as was the existence of the NSC 26 order that provided the policy framework for those decisions.

During later debates, Bush's first NSC Adviser Brent Scowcroft, contended that the Bush administration "did not 'coddle' Saddam," as it had been accused of doing by congressional Democrats. "There was broad bipartisan consensus behind the open US policy of providing political and economic support to Iraq during the later stages of its war with Iran ... Congress debated and approved Operation Earnest Will (protection for Kuwaiti oil tankers in the Gulf). Congressional intelligence committees reviewed and concurred with our activities in the region."

Partisan politics concerning US policy on Iraq had become "sheer McCarthyism," Scowcroft said, and an "attempt to transform a legitimate policy debate into a criminal conspiracy."¹⁸ (left) ■



ENDNOTES:

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2. Robert Toth, "U.S. Acts to Curb Terrorism Abroad," *Los Angeles Times*, Apr. 15, 1984; David Hoffman and Don Oberdorfer, "Secret Policy on Terrorism Given Airing," *Washington Post*, Apr. 18, 1984.
3. David Ignatius, "Iran Stiffens Stance Toward West; U.S. Saw Increasing Role in Gulf as Simple Extension of Policy," *Washington Post*, Aug. 23, 1987.
4. Bob Woodward, *Veil: The Secret Wars of the CIA 1981-1987* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), pp. 393-98.
5. Bob Woodward and Walter Pincus, "1984 Order Gave CIA Latitude, Reagan's Secret Move to Counter Terrorists Called 'License to Kill,'" *Washington Post*, Oct. 5, 1988; and Bob Woodward and Charles Babcock, "Antiterrorist Plan Rescinded After Unauthorized Bombing," *Washington Post*, May 12, 1985; Joe Pichirallo and Edward Cody, "U.S. Trains Antiterrorists," *Washington Post*, Mar. 24, 1985; Nora Boustany, "Beirut Bomb's Legacy: Suspicion and Tears," *Washington Post*, Mar. 6, 1988.
6. For a popular account of clandestine operation with *Veil*-level classification, see Bob Woodward, *Veil ... op. cit.*
7. President's Special Review Board, *The Tower Commission Report*, pp. 114-28, quote p. 116.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Several NSC members contend that many of George Bush's public statements on his role in this meeting and the subsequent Iran-Contra affair were fabrications. See Walter Pincus, "Shultz Memoirs Say Bush Misstated Arms-for-Hostages Role," *Washington Post*, Jan. 31, 1993; Walter Pincus, "Roots of Bush's Iran Credibility Gap; Weinberger Note is Latest Challenge to '87 Statements on Arms Sales," *Washington Post*, Nov. 2, 1992.
10. Ronald Reagan, "The Terrorist Menace: Speech to the American Bar Association," (July 8, 1985), WCPD, July 15, 1985, pp. 876-82; see also David Martin and John Walcott, *The Best Laid Plans* (New York: Harper & Row, 1988), pp. 161-202.
11. George Shultz, "Preemptive or Retaliatory Actions to Combat Terrorism" (July 17, 1985), Department of State Bulletin, Sept. 1985, p. 36.

12. "Declaration of G. Philip Hughes" (executive secretary of NSC), May 12, 1989, *Center for National Security Studies v. Immigration and Naturalization Service*, Civil Action 87-2068, US District Court for the District of Columbia; see also Eve Pell, "Kicking Out Palestinians," *The Nation*, Feb. 5, 1990, pp. 167-68.
13. The "Rewards Program for Terrorism Information" established by this provision had paid out approximately \$2 million in rewards as of summer 1992. Janice Castro, "The Terrorist Bounty Hunters," *Time*, Aug. 10, 1992, p. 11.
14. This appears to have been the Terrorist Incident Working Group. See NSDD -276, p. 3.
15. Woodward, *Veil*, *op. cit.*, pp. 474-77; John Walcott and Gerald Seib, "New Signs That Libya is Plotting Terrorism Bring Quick Response," *Wall Street Journal*, Aug. 25, 1986; Bob Woodward, "Gadhafi Target of Secret U.S. Deception Plan," *Washington Post*, Oct. 2, 1986; David Hoffman, "President Says He Intends to Keep Gadhafi Off Balance," *Washington Post*, Oct. 3, 1986; John Walcott, "U.S. Credibility on Libya is Damaged by White House Campaign of Deception," *Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 6, 1986.
16. *Ibid.*; Eleanor Randolph, "In the Dog Days of August, the Media Missed the Hottest Story," *Washington Post*, Oct. 3, 1986.
17. Douglas Frantz and Murray Waas, "Bush Secret Effort Helped Iraq Build Its War Machine" (Feb. 23, 1992), "Bush Had Long History of Support for Iraq Aid" (Feb. 24, 1992), "U.S. Loans Indirectly Financed Iraq Military" (Feb. 25, 1992), all in *Los Angeles Times*. Alan Friedman, Lionel Barber, Tom Lannery and Eric Reguly, "CIA allowed illegal export of US missile secrets," *Financial Times* (London), May 24, 1991. George Lardner and Benjamin Weiser, "Senate Committee to Air Allegations of Slanted Intelligence Under Gates" (Aug. 20, 1991), George Lardner, "White House Curbed Release of Data on Prewar Support of Iraq, Hill Told" (Mar. 17, 1992), George Lardner and R. Jeffrey Smith, "CIA Shared Data With Iraq Until Kuwait Invasion" (Apr. 28, 1992), R. Jeffrey Smith and John Goshko, "Ill-Fated Iraq Policy Originated Shortly After Bush Took Office" (June 27, 1992), John Goshko, "Before the Gulf War, Iraq Was a 'Sixth-Floor Problem' [at the State Department]" (July 7, 1992), R. Jeffrey Smith, "Pentagon Sought Exchange With Iraq," (Aug. 4, 1992), "Verbatim [on NSD 26]" (Aug. 5, 1992), wire services, "86 Iraq-Iran Initiative by Bush Alleged" (Oct. 25, 1992), all in the *Washington Post*. On human rights issues: Middle East Watch, *Human Rights in Iraq* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1990).
18. Brent Scowcroft, "We Didn't 'Coddle' Saddam," *Washington Post*, Oct. 10, 1992.

(Letters to editor, cont. from inside cover)

can and Muslim hierarchies in their opposition to birth control and abortion, which, given the suffering and violence continued population growth will engender, is an epitome of immorality. This suggests that "Lying for a Living," can be found in CAQ as well as Washington. While I value CAQ's concern for social equity, its exposure of massive greed and the lack of concern for most of the world's population evidenced by most of corporate America and its political minions, any movement that hopes to remain effective in an open democratic environment must begin with a scrupulous examination and adherence to the facts. To fail to do so is to become one more propaganda machine.

ROBERT NEWHARD
Torrance, Calif.

Betsy Hartmann Replies

I was not surprised that my article on population elicited these responses. Population remains a controversial issue, left, right and center. I offer these points for consideration.

1) While world population is growing, it is true that birth rates are declining in most places in the world. Desired family size is also falling. There is a powerful demographic momentum built into our present numbers, particularly because there are so many people nearing or of reproductive age. But it is important to note the onset of demographic transition from high to low birth rates even in countries like Kenya which once had one of the highest birth rates in the world.

2) Garrett Hardin is hardly a good source

on the demographic transition. He has advocated famine as a way to reduce population and cut-offs of foreign assistance to needy countries. His life-boat ethics are infamous. Hardin has links with right-wing eugenics and anti-immigration groups and has been funded by the Pioneer Fund, the major US eugenics foundation, and is an adviser to the Federation for American Immigration Control, Population-Environment Balance, and Americans for Immigration Control. It is not a myth, or even a radical view, that birth rates generally decline when people have access to health, education, employment and social security systems outside the family — read a demography textbook. Or look at the experience of Taiwan, Korea, Kerala state in India, Cuba, Sri Lanka ...

3) Population control has been a consistent, if not a dominant, theme in US foreign policy since the 1970s. The US has also exercised much influence over multilateral aid organizations and national governments in regard to population policy. It is true that Cairo has ushered in reforms (wider reproductive health services vs. just family planning, greater attention to choice and women's rights, etc.). These changes are welcome and are largely the result of pressure from the international women's movement. Implementation is problematic, however, and there are battles going on inside the US Agency for International Development between the old guard and reformers. There are also major issues concerning the choice of contraceptive technology in US-funded programs. Do you promote Norplant or the condom, for exam-

ple? And then, of course, there is pressure from right-wing anti-abortion forces to cut off aid to family planning. I believe reproductive rights activists should keep pushing for reforms of US policy, while continually differentiating themselves from both the population control establishment and the right wing.

4) An interesting irony is how the Clinton administration now promotes itself as the defender of women's rights overseas, while endorsing welfare and immigration reforms at home which directly threaten the health of millions of women and children. It may be that our domestic population policy is becoming much worse now than our international one. I also remain concerned about the rhetoric of "the greening of security" which blames population pressure on resources for political violence in the Third World. This is a growing trend which needs to be challenged by progressive environmentalists, peace activists, and others.

5) I don't think everyone in the population field is a racist, but check out Robert Kaplan's book *The Ends of the Earth* if you want to see an example of racism in population and environment discourse.

6) If you really want to address rapid population growth, address poverty, social injustice, and women's rights as worthwhile goals in and of themselves. Certainly, it's politically riskier in the present environment to take this line, but it's good politics, common sense, and builds bridges between people instead of erecting unnecessary barriers in the name of population control. ■

Government, Media, and Burning Black Churches

Ashes of Racism, Fires of Terror

The smoke from the scores of black churches torched in the last few years lays a haze of racism across the country. Investigators and the media have ignored a context of centuries-long racism and an atmosphere of terror.

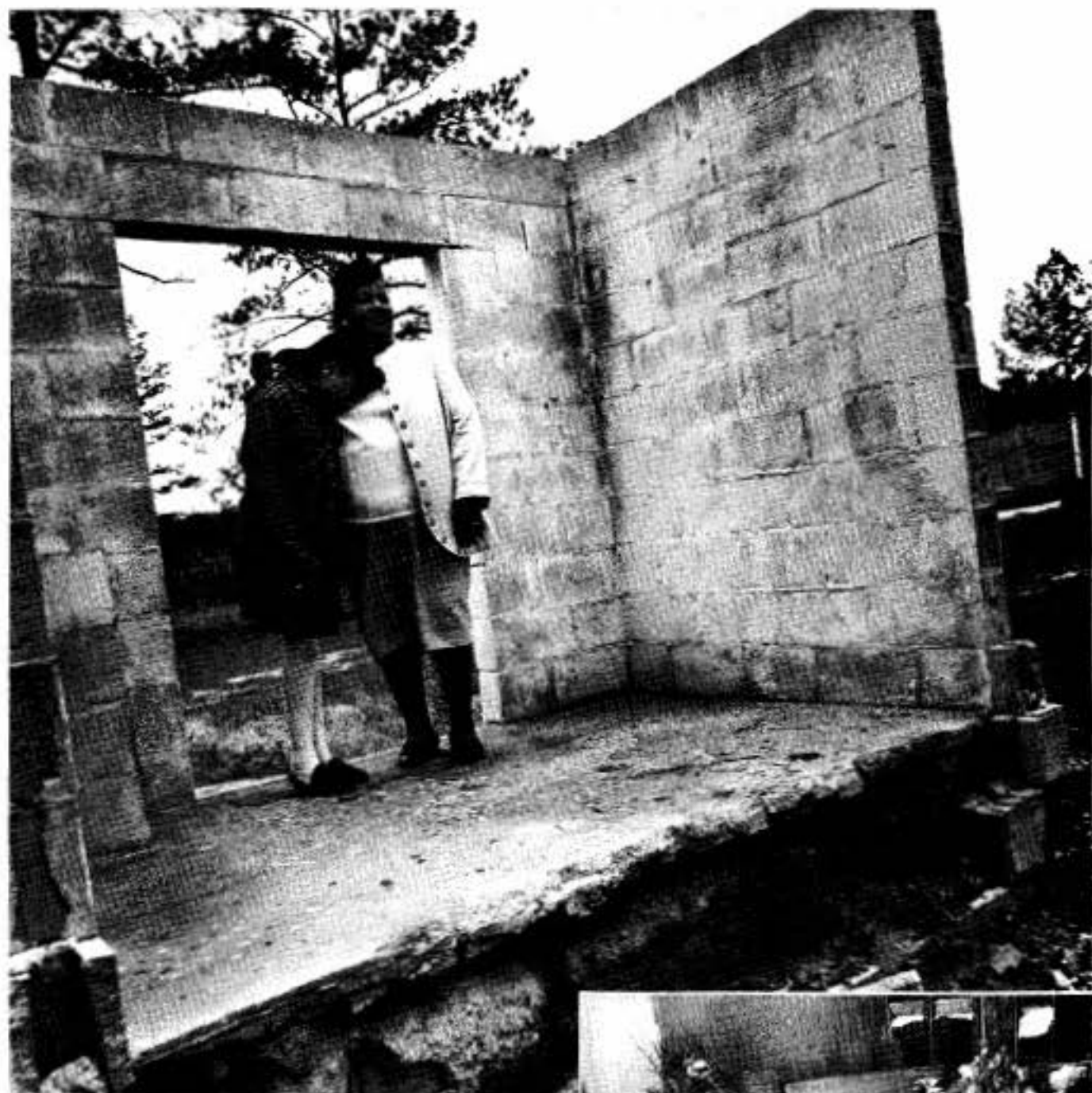
by Ron Nixon

The 1994 World Trade Center bombing, the bombings at the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995 and Atlanta's Centennial Park during the 1996 Olympics, as well as the crash of TWA flight 800, focused public fear on the vulnerability of the US to terrorist attacks. These tragedies sparked intensive investigations and provoked often strident calls for countermeasures. Although some of the assaults were attributed to foreign fanatics, others brought home the reality that America is capable of producing its own violent extremists.

For many, particularly media pundits, these attacks signal the end of American insouciance: Terrorism has finally penetrated US borders. Yet strangely absent in the public discourse on the perceived upsurge in domestic terrorism is a long pattern of attacks against abortion providers¹ and the recent targeting of a central organization, especially in the South, for much of

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1. For information of attacks on abortion clinics, see Tom Burghardt, "Neo-Nazis Salute the Anti-Abortion Zealots," *CAQ*, Spring 1995.



Rev. Patricia Lowman and daughter (above) in ruins of St. John's Baptist Church. Debris (r.) from fire at the Rosemary Baptist Church. Both churches were in South Carolina.

black culture, political organizing, and life—the church. According to the Atlanta watchdog group, the Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR), more than 80 black churches have been burned or desecrated since 1990.² From January 1995 through July 1996, at least 42 have been set on fire. While politicians have paid lip service and passed what many church leaders feel is a meaningless bill

2. Center for Democratic Renewal (CDR), *Report on Church Fires*, 1996, p. 1.



to raise the penalty for burning a house of worship, they have refused to classify these attacks as acts of terrorism or even as racially motivated. In a national radio address and in a two-hour meeting with ministers from a number of black churches, President Clinton said



Parents and children of the Mt. Zion congregation (above) pray in an apartment after their church was torched. Parents and children in Pulaski, Tennessee, march through town.

that the fires are the result of "racial hostility," but stopped short of calling the burnings acts of terrorism.³

"The problem with the Clinton administration is that they have yet to say to the nation that this is domestic terrorism and they will not tolerate it," said CDR's research director, Rose Johnson. "Until such time as that comes out of the administration's mouth, I think the nation knows that they're not serious. [The burning of churches] is terrorism by the administration's own definition and it must take a stand."⁴

Terrorism? What Terrorism?

According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), domestic terrorism is the "unlawful use of force or terror against persons or property to intimidate or coerce the government, civilian population or any segment thereof in furtherance of political or social objectives."⁵ Under this definition, at least some of the church fires could be classified as acts of terrorism. Consider the following:

- South Carolina, June 1995. Two white men were convicted of burning two black churches and stabbing a mentally ill black man. Both culprits, Christopher Cox and Timothy Welch, were members of the Christian Knights

of the Ku Klux Klan. Police confirmed that they attended a Klan meeting shortly before the burnings at which the speaker stated that black churches instruct African Americans on how to get on welfare. Several days later Herbert Rowell, a Klansman who had attended the meeting and was a friend of the two suspects, asked reporters, "Have you ever noticed that when there's free cheese or milk and stuff? We [whites] don't know about it, but they [blacks] are the first in line." Cox and Welch also had contact with another Klansman, Arthur Haley, whose home was raided by Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) agents. Guns and Klan paraphernalia were confiscated. The pastor of one of the churches burned by Cox and Welch was threatened after the two were arrested and later charged with conspiracy to violate civil rights. According to the minister, he was approached by an unidentified man who said, "I'm going to get you nigger."⁶

- Bowling Green, Kentucky, 1993. Ernest Pierce, state leader of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and three others

were indicted and prosecuted on federal charges for the December 1991 burning of Barren River Baptist Church. Court records show that five days after the church fire, Pierce came to a Klan meeting, threw down a newspaper with coverage of the fire, and congratulated members on a job well done. After a KKK march, the minister of the church had openly criticized Pierce and the Klan. In court, Pierce testified that he torched the church in retaliation for the criticism.⁷



- Southeastern Arkansas, May 17, 1992. Three black churches in Oak Grove and St. James in Desha County, and Love Rest Baptist Church in Arkansas County, were burned by two white males, Kenneth A. Coates and Perry Moore, both age 23. According to Assistant US Attorney Michael D. Johnson, the two men wanted to "get African Americans." Moore and Coates pleaded guilty to conspiracy to burn the churches.⁸
- Clarksville, Tennessee, 1995. Shortly after what the Justice Department called a "racially motivated arson spree," a church was burned. During the spree, molotov cocktails had been thrown at the home of an African American family while they were asleep. A Nashville, Tennessee man convicted on federal charges for the string of fires is serving eight years in prison. The man belonged to a white

3. President's Weekly Radio Address, June 8, 1996.

4. Interview July 19, 1996.

5. CDR, *op. cit.*

6. Twila Decker, "Fires Follow Klan Rally," *State*, May 13, 1996, p. 1.

7. Chris Poore, "Conflict with Klan Started in 1980's, Pastor Testifies in Church Burning Trial," *Lexington Herald-Ledger*, Mar. 16, 1993, p. A1.

8. Associated Press, "Guilty Pleas," *Memphis Commercial Appeal*, Aug. 29, 1992, p. B8.

supremacist group, the Aryan Faction, dedicated to driving blacks out of Clarksville. No one has been arrested in the burning of the church.⁹

These attacks, and many others that followed, share a similar profile: They are racially inspired and are usually preceded by years of intimidation by hate groups and individuals.

Nonetheless, federal investigators do not see them as terrorism and rarely acknowledge that they are racially motivated. At the top, Attorney General Janet Reno and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin have pledged all available resources toward finding the culprits in the church fires. On the local level, however, FBI and ATF agents aren't as enthusiastic.

Says FBI agent Jim Brown with the agency's Birmingham, Alabama office, "Just because you have white people burning black churches doesn't mean that it's racially motivated or domestic terrorism."¹⁰ FBI head Louis Freeh, who recently testified at a congressional hearing on the terrorism in Atlanta and possibly in the TWA crash, has yet to issue a statement on the church fires. Nor did he testify at the congressional hearings on the subject held in May.

Shifting the Blame

When law enforcement and the media failed to find an organized conspiracy behind the church fires, they sought to characterize the incidents as politically as well as geographically isolated. If the attacks are not linked through a cabal of individuals or organizations, they seemed to be saying, they can have no connection to each other at all. Instead of seeing the arson as a natural byproduct of a pervasive atmosphere of racism, scapegoating, and official neglect, many reports discredited charges of racism or terrorism. In this backlash, the media juggled statistics and focused on the small number of blacks arrested in connection with the church fires.

The Associated Press weighed in with a July 5, 1996 article that hit the front page of newspapers nationwide.¹¹

Based on interviews with law enforcement officials, insurance companies, and the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) which tracks church fires, AP concluded that charges of racism or domestic terrorism were unfounded. "There is no evidence that most of the 73 black church fires recorded since

"Just because you have white people burning black churches doesn't mean it's racially motivated or domestic terrorism."

1995 can be blamed on a conspiracy or a climate of racial hatred," wrote AP reporter Fred Bayles.¹² "There's a lot of feeling out there that these fires are copycat fires," says Richard Gilman of the Insurance Committee for Arson Control, a trade group that uses insurance data to track fires.¹³

12. *Ibid.*

13. *Ibid.*

Using similar data, *New Yorker* writer Michael Kelly also discounted racism and domestic terror as a motive for the burning of black churches — blaming instead the CDR for causing a crisis to serve its own interests.¹⁴ "An epidemic of church burnings is the sort of crisis that engenders respectful attention from the press, opens wallets of the people on the mailing list, and provides a virtually unassailable vehicle for the advancing of the group's larger agenda," Kelly wrote.¹⁵ He quotes the NFPA as saying the number of fires is actually down.

Also citing the NFPA as well as southern law enforcement officials, Michael Fumento charged in a *Wall Street Journal* op-ed that portraying the church fires as a serious crisis was a deliberate hoax by the Center for Democratic Renewal.¹⁶ "What the Klan could no longer do, a group established to fight the Klan is now doing ... frightening black churchgoers," the conservative attorney wrote.¹⁷

14. Michael Kelly, "Playing with Fire," *New Yorker*, July 15, 1996, pp. 28-35.

15. *Ibid.*

16. Michael Fumento, "A Church Arson Epidemic? It's Smoke and Mirrors," *Wall Street Journal*, July 9, 1996.

17. *Ibid.*



Volunteers join contractors to help rebuild Mt. Zion Church after it was destroyed by an arson attack just before Christmas 1995.

9. Justice Department, website, June 1995.

10. Interview, May 22, 1996.

11. Fred Bayles, "Richmond Dispatch-Times Link of Racism to Many Church Fires Rebutted," *Associated Press*, July 5, 1996, p. 1.

The problem with the analysis of these three writers is their over-reliance on data that is likely to be incomplete and misleading. Insurance industry statistics, for example, can omit cases of arson at black churches, especially those in rural poor areas, since they are sometimes uninsured. And using data compiled by the National Fire Protection Association — which Fumento himself admits is limited — is a sure way to dismiss claims of racism. Because the association does not keep statistics by race, it has no way to determine how many black churches burn. Nor are official statistics likely to reveal an accurate count since only about 44 percent of all fires are reported each year. Further limiting the accuracy of information, NFPA gets much of its data from reports filed by state agencies to the Federal Emergency Management Agency. States are not required to file these reports and not all do.¹⁸

A Legacy of Racism

Finally, all three writers depend on federal and state law enforcement officials to determine if the fires are racially motivated acts of terrorism or simple arson. While both Kelly and Fumento question the motive of civil rights lead-

James O. Ingram, who helped to implement COINTELPRO, now leads the investigation into the black church fires in Mississippi.

ers for calling attention to the church fires, they wholeheartedly accept the conclusions of law enforcement officials. This bias ignores the fact that many of these agencies have been accused of racism and, as a matter of record, have led attacks on blacks.

- The FBI assault on black liberation movements is well known. Through its COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence) program, the bureau targeted black leaders including Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X, the Black Panthers, and Elijah Muhammad of the

Nation of Islam. The goal, according to an August 25, 1967 memo from J. Edgar Hoover, who spearheaded the program, was to "expose, disrupt, discredit, or otherwise neutralize the activities" of black groups and leaders.¹⁹ One of the people who helped to implement COINTELPRO was James O. Ingram. He is now director of Public Safety in Mississippi and leads the investigation into the black church fires.²⁰

- Over the years, the FBI has come under criticism for targeting black elected officials such as Mayor Richard Arrington of Birmingham, Alabama, and many members of the Congressional Black Caucus.²¹
- In the mid-1970s, the ATF was instrumental in framing the "Wilmington 10," a group of North Carolina civil rights activists led by Ben Chavis, wrongfully jailed for racial violence and burning a white store. Instead of going after Klansmen — who were suspected by community members of starting the racial violence and torching the store — the ATF coerced three black prisoners into blaming Chavis and the others. Although the three later admitted lying, the FBI and a federal court refused to reopen the case and the 10 served a number of years in prison before international pressure forced their release.²²

- In 1995, the ATF again gained attention for its racism when it was discovered that many of its agents had attended a "good ol' boy roundup" in Tennessee, where racist literature was sold and skits de-

grading blacks were performed. Some of the agents who attended these roundups were later assigned to the church burnings. They were removed after public outcry from the black community.²³

- Just recently, ATF settled a lawsuit by 240 current and former African

American agents charging racism and overt discrimination.²⁴

- The FBI has also been sued numerous times by black agents for discrimination.²⁵

Racism? What Racism?

There is a difference between the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and in Oklahoma, and the attacks on black churches. For one thing, no one has yet been killed in the church arsons. But the number of incidents and the extent of the damage to community is far from insignificant, and the terror they spread is part of a long historical pattern. Different, too, is the reluctance of officials to brand the church burnings as terrorism. Even in the downing of TWA Flight 800, when terrorism was only suspected, the threat to public safety was considered so serious that vast investigatory resources were instantly mobilized. In the church burnings, however, every reason other than political motivation or terrorism is given while the media and official investigators discount or downplay the role of racism. "When it comes to attacks on black people, the terrorist or attacker is always given the benefit of the doubt," says Selma, Alabama attorney Rose Sanders.²⁶

And while there is doubt of some overarching conspiracy, that question is largely irrelevant — either to defining the crimes as terrorist or to understanding that they are fundamentally racist. There is a long history by the Klan and other white supremacist groups of targeting churches. These attacks hit at the heart of African American life in the South and, like cross burnings and lynchings, they are designed to show blacks who is in control and to keep them in their place in a white man's world. A government that does not act swiftly to investigate and deter these crimes as good as lays the tinder and provides the matches for the destructive fires of racism. ■

24. Pacifica Network News, July 19, 1996.

25. Burnham, op. cit.

26. Interview, Apr. 16, 1996.

19. Brian Glick, *War At Home* (Boston: South End Press, 1989), p. 77.

20. Kenneth O'Reilly, *Racial Matters* (New York: The Free Press, 1989), p. 177.

21. David Burnham, *Above the Law* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1996), pp. 247-55.

22. Glick, op. cit., p. 24.

23. Department of the Treasury Report on the Good ol' Boys Roundup Policy Review, Apr. 1996.

18. Interview, July 29, 1996.

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USAID PHOTO

The mantra of sustainable development has replaced the dogma of anticommunism as a post-Cold War AID continues to make the world safe for US investments.

by Tom Barry

Around the world, from Prague to New Delhi, from Mexico City to Moscow, US government officials and consultants are preaching sustainable development. The green in these environmental assistance programs is not only the color of "environmentally friendly" policies, it is also the color of money. The problem, the US tells other nations, is environmental degradation; the solution is expensive US environmental technology and services (ET). US aid money, the official line goes, is available to subsidize the

cost of that technological fix, but only if the recipient country first implements structural adjustment programs that facilitate US trade and investment.

Nor is the US coy about admitting that this post-Cold War spin on the traditional politics of foreign aid is primarily a self-serving sales pitch. Under attack by Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and the right, the Agency for International Development (AID) has been quick to point out that "foreign aid is not something we do for others, but something we do to preserve and protect American interests and values."¹ According to AID, the degradation of world-wide natural resources hurts productivity,

which, in the integrated global economy, translates into reduced trade and investment opportunities for the US.

When he went before Congress to defend the agency's budget, AID head Brian Atwood stressed the link between environmental aid and US exports:

Does it make any sense for America to potentially turn away from a \$300 billion annual market in environmental goods? Without US support for environmental programs under way in these countries, American firms will be losing their comparative advantage. It makes no sense at all to drastically cut these funds and shoot our own businesspeople in the foot.²

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Photo: Egyptian farmers work under cloud of pollution.

1. Agency for International Development, Congressional Presentation, FY 1996, p. 6.

2. Statement of Brian Atwood, Senate Appropriations Subcommittee on Foreign Operations, May 11, 1995, p. 8.

Corporations — especially those manufacturing the products that will be exported — applauded the taxpayer-supported environmental assistance schemes. James Wolf, Honeywell's vice president of Energy and Environmental Markets, was enthusiastic: "AID's assistance paves the way for US technology and know-how in the emerging markets." But, he warned, "Reducing [AID's] commitment to sustainable energy policies and programs will undermine our competitiveness in international markets."³

An array of US agencies — including the Energy and Commerce Departments, Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Export-Import Bank — have joined together to push the new greenish agenda. With AID in the lead, the Clinton administration is proposing to:

- change environmental policies overseas while encouraging foreign governments to purchase US technology;
- foster the sell-off of government-owned utility and energy companies while facilitating US investment in the privatized companies;
- earmark environmental assistance funds, particularly in the energy sector, for the purchase of US products;
- provide technical aid and training by representatives of US ET firms; and
- establish programs dedicated to promoting ET trade.

Free Market Environment

The integration of environmentalism into US foreign policy started in the 1970s when US environmental organizations insisted that AID assess the environmental impact before beginning major development projects. For a while it seemed that concern for environmental rights might limit the reach of US corporations and impose global standards. Some activists were hopeful when the 1992 UN Conference on Environment and Development, or Rio Earth Summit, helped launch new US government programs focused on the global environmental crisis and environmental protection.

It turned out, however, that the most enduring legacy of the Rio Earth Sum-

mit was its call for "sustainable development through trade liberalization." At Rio, official circles agreed that free-market economics was the best way to protect the environment and promote development. They used the notion of sustainable development to rescue and protect the traditional concept of economic growth and to deflect environmental critics. As Wolfgang Sachs, an ecological economist, observed, "Environmentalism has become the highest form of developmentalism."⁴

Neatly sidestepping the question of whether Cold War development patterns are still appropriate,

Agenda 21, the document of the 1992

Rio Summit, proposed a fix for any environmental problems that result from industrialization, urbanization, agribusi-

ness, or resource depletion. By importing "cleaner technology" from the North, the South could continue developing its energy and industrial infrastructure while reducing the associated levels of pollution. This technological fix was supposed to benefit the South (more efficient production) as well as the North (increased exports). While the value to either the South or the global environment is doubtful, the emphasis undoubtedly allowed the US to

About \$650 million in annual AID funding goes to environmental assistance; about 80% of all foreign aid never leaves the US.

increase its dominance of the international market in environmental technology and services, a business that brings in \$14 billion in foreign sales.

Free Market Solutions

AID, no longer preoccupied with the threat of communism — but suddenly worried about charges of post-Cold War irrelevancy — knew a good thing when it saw one. The agency quickly adopted the language of the Earth Summit and redefined its core mission as sustain-

able development — to be built on the three pillars of democracy promotion, free-market economic solutions, and environmental protection. About 80 percent of foreign aid goes to American consultants and supplies and never leaves the US. Between 1990 and 1996, about 12 percent of AID funding, approximately \$650 million a year, was dedicated to environmental assistance.⁵

AID's green camouflage allowed it to dodge several political bullets. Instead of radically redefining what is meant by the term "development," aid agencies took an end run on the problem by advocating development that is more resource efficient. Instead of recognizing that the global ecology cannot support the continued consumption habits of the industrialized nations or the adoption of these patterns by less developed states, the industrialized nations are promoting the export of pollution-control and energy technologies. They are also pushing recipient countries to place a higher priority on programs such as reforestation and biodiversity protection that are intended to alleviate the global environmental crunch. The advantage to this resource-efficient sustainable development model is that it is compatible with those economic policies that benefit the industrialized nations: liberalized trade, capital flow, debt payment, and structural adjustment.

The argument that free trade is conducive to sustainable development is made not only by traders and investors, but also by many of the most influential environmental organizations. Groups such as the World Wildlife Fund and the Environmental Defense Fund contend that economic growth makes more

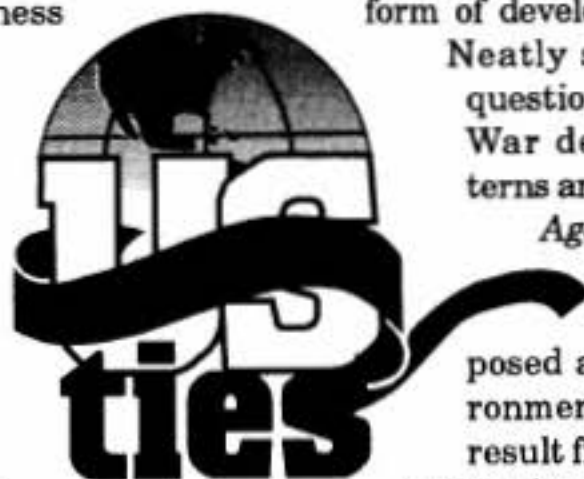
money available for environmental projects and that liberalized trade opens up countries to the pro-environmental influence of US policy makers and NGOs (non-governmental organizations). Thus enriched and enlightened, these nations will complete the circle and adopt sustainable development policies.

Meanwhile, AID — by trying to juggle the often incompatible goals of pro-

3. Statement of James Wolf, vice president, Honeywell Inc., before the House Appropriations and Foreign Operations Subcommittee, Apr. 25, 1994, p. 3.

4. Wolfgang Sachs, ed., *Global Ecology: A New Arena of Political Conflict* (Halifax, NS: Fernwood Books, 1993).

5. Figures from AID's Center for Environment, AID's Congressional Presentations, FY 1990-96; and Jon Stewart, "The Selling of Foreign Aid," *San Francisco Chronicle*, June 30, 1996.



moting US business interests and addressing environmental considerations — has tied itself in ideological knots and limited its effectiveness. The agency's conception of conservation and environmental problem-solving is straitjacketed by its commitment to increasing economic growth and private sector profits. Its philosophy of free-market environmentalism preempts consideration of development alternatives that emphasize quality of life over capitalist growth and that expand rather than shrink the regulatory capacity of the public sector. In the end, because of its close association with business interests, AID is one more US government agency with a mandate to promote the export of US goods and services.

Special Place for the Private Sector

The US government's foreign assistance program does not simply fund projects, it also uses aid to leverage recipient governments. Wherever AID distributes environmental aid, it also shapes environmental policy. Although the agency's focus varies by country, a common element is the promotion of private sector domination of environmental programs. In Bulgaria, for example, the agency's declared objective is "the forging of environmental policies to favor private sector, market-based solutions; improving the efficiency and effectiveness of public sector environmental investment; and supporting market-based approaches to biodiversity preservation and enhancement."⁶

Consistent with the neoliberal argument that the public sector is an obstacle to economic efficiency, AID argues that the private sector is the most appropriate and efficient source of environmental solutions. Critics counter that the private business sector, by definition, seeks to maximize profits, not to serve the commonweal. Only government, which gains legitimacy by providing economic and social stability, can ensure that development is environmentally sustainable. And only a strong public sector — local, national, and international — can guarantee



MARK LUDAK/IMPACT VISUALS

Demonstrators at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio understood the implications of Washington's new-found commitment to the global environment.

that private use of natural resources does not endanger the common good.

Caught up in the logic of neoliberalism, the US pressures aid recipients to downsize the public sector by selling off state corporations, cutting budgets, and turning over such social services as health care, education, and natural resources management to private business. While this strategy creates new opportunities for US investors and generates cash to service external debt, it leaves recipient governments without funds or capacity to protect their natural environments.

Because the AID-funded programs also reflect this emphasis on private sector solutions, they often end up providing more help to US businesses than to the environment. More than other program areas, except those explicitly aimed at promoting private business, AID's environmental assistance program is integrally tied to fostering US trade and investment. AID describes its approach as a "partnership" between government and businesses to protect the environment, but unlike most financial partnerships, one side takes few risks. The exports and foreign investments by US business benefit from an array of US government services and subsidies.

Better Red Than Green

A good example of the self-serving character of US aid is the US/Asia Environ-

mental Partnership (US/AEP), which operates under AID's Center for Trade and Investment Services. Established in 1992 with a \$100 million AID grant, US/AEP is a promotional organization for ET exporters and investors designed to increase US participation in Asia's environmental protection and energy industries. It seeks to link US businesses with governments and business sectors in the Asian/Pacific region, which has the world's highest growth rate in the use of environmental technology. US/AEP works closely with another AID-financed organization, the Environmental Technology Network for Asia, which provides grants to local businesses and institutions for US environmental technology and services. None of the several US/AEP programs makes any attempt to evaluate the quality of the technology they promote or determine if it is appropriate to local conditions. As an analyst with Environmental Business International observed, "The purpose of AEP is to sell, sell, sell."⁷

AID's environmental assistance, often carried out in association with the World Bank, is also a key component in the US aid that flooded the former Soviet bloc after the disintegration of the USSR. Aimed at overhauling the economic and political systems, the FREEDOM program for the Newly Independent

6. SEED Act Implementation Report, State Department, FY94, pp. 177-78.

7. Interview, Matt Nussbaum, June 13, 1996.

States of the former Soviet Union and the SEED program for Central and Eastern European countries couple policy reform with project assistance.

In describing its environmental program for the Czech Republic, the State Department is blunt about the link:

US environmental assistance to the Czech Republic is designed to support economic restructuring and reduction of environmental threats to human health through three objectives: supporting reform of the environment-related legal, regulatory, and policy environment; strengthening the institutional capacity in environmental management; and increasing the level of environmental investments.⁸

In addition to tying environmental aid to the purchase of US goods, Washington also controls how the local currency generated from the grant is used. The local currency that the private sector and public sector companies and institutions give to the government in exchange for the dollars needed to purchase US technology goes into a fund controlled by Washington.

AID has contracted with a corporate NGO, World Environment Center (WEC), to direct the use of this fund in the Czech Republic and other nations receiving SEED and FREEDOM grants.¹⁰ In addition, the WEC consultant helped draft an environmental liability law — a precondition for foreign investors who are reluctant to invest in privatizing

tional manufacturing corporations" that "meets quarterly for off-the-record discussions with senior policy makers from around the world."¹¹

Typical of US environmental aid programs, AID in the Czech Republic hired a US consultant to ease American investment in local businesses. The program provides technical assistance to Czech companies "to facilitate their access to financing and opportunities for joint ventures with US companies" and "to familiarize them with US environmental equipment, technologies, and engineering consulting services."¹²

The energy assistance part of the US environmental aid program in the Czech Republic also keeps US business interests in mind. As in other transitional nations, state-owned energy and utility companies are being rapidly privatized. Under AID sponsorship, Houston Lighting and Power, the "sister utility" of Czech Power Works, provides information and support in this process. Central Maine and Electroteck "are working with the Prague distribution company on its strategy for selecting foreign partners." AID has contracted with another US company, FGG/Hagler, Bailly, to develop markets for energy and environmental services that will be needed as economic restructuring and privatization advance.¹³

In neighboring Slovakia, the same kind of "foot in the door" environmental assistance programs are helping US corporations grab a piece of privatizing power companies. In the name of helping the global environment, AID has contracted with the US-based Bechtel Corp. to guide restructuring of the power sector. AID has also hired Bechtel and the US Energy Association (USEA) to help the Anti-Monopoly Office (established to oversee privatization) prepare a new energy law. Interestingly, many USEA members are legal monopolies in the US.

Throughout the former Soviet Union and Central and Eastern Europe, AID's environmental program is busily opening the doors for such US companies as Westinghouse and General Electric. Two-thirds of AID's energy assistance goes to these regions, mostly to create markets and investment opportunities for US firms in the coal, electricity, and oil/gas industries that are privatizing



Eastern Europe is expected to provide markets for US goods and technology. Slovaks like these can expect changes that may not leave them better off.

"National" environment plans are being formulated along with economic restructuring plans. Again, quoting from the SEED program:

AID, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the World Bank cooperated with Czech officials in drafting a national environmental strategy and action plan. This strategy was used as part of the World Bank's structural adjustment loan and as the basis for a \$15 million AID environmental sector grant. The \$10 million allocated to the Czech Republic has been fully transferred for the importation of US goods.⁹

state enterprises until laws are passed that limit their liability for environmental damages. A major conduit for AID's and EPA's technical assistance to foreign governments, WEC exists to serve the interests of transnational corporations. Nine of its 15 board members and officers are corporate representatives, and one of its main programs, the International Environment Forum, is "a group of 65 major multina-

10. The State Department administers two major programs, funded largely by AID, to promote democracy and economic reform in the transitional states of the former Soviet bloc. The East European Democracy Program (SEED) is active in Central Europe, while the Freedom for Russia and East European Democracies and Open Markets (FREEDOM) program operates in the Newly Independent States (NIS) of the former USSR.

11. Information supplied by WEC, June 21, 1996.

12. SEED, *op. cit.*, p. 174.

13. *Ibid.*

8. SEED Act, *op. cit.*

9. *Ibid.*



LIZ GREEN/IMPACT VISUALS

While the US fueled its growth with high-pollution industries like this paper mill, Washington, in the name of environmentalism, is pressuring less developed countries to take a more expensive path.

under pressure from AID and the World Bank. In case after case, public concern over environmental degradation has been subsumed by the neoliberal reliance on private sector growth to solve all problems. The point was not lost on Tayfun A. Gunusen, Moscow director of Burns and Roe Enterprises, which has a multimillion dollar contract with AID. Asked about the benefits of AID assistance, he said, "I don't see it as foreign aid. I see it as business development for US companies in general."¹⁴

Attacked at Home, EPA Heads Abroad

US environmental technology providers also have a friend in the EPA. Through its Office of International Activities, the agency encourages foreign governments to buy technology and consulting services from the same polluting industries that attack the EPA at home. Unlike such institutions as Eximbank, the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, and AID, which help finance US trade and investment, EPA's business promotion efforts are less direct. Rather than directly financing environmental technology exports or investment, the EPA encourages governments to adopt environmental policies while at the same time sponsoring demonstrations of US technology. The agency also hires US businesses to pro-

vide the necessary technical assistance and training.

Although the EPA officials, unlike those for AID, *et al.*, are careful to measure the success of their overseas work in environmental terms, the agency often appears to be an extension of the Commerce Department. Together with AID, Commerce, and US West, EPA collaborated on the publication of *The Green Pages*, an environmental technology advertising forum and directory of ET providers. Demonstrating the "important role EPA can play in the environmental export promotion arena," EPA officials now commonly accompany overseas trade and investment missions sponsored by Commerce.¹⁵ After returning from one such trip to India, Alan D. Hecht of EPA's Office of International Activities explained:

EPA's international programs do play a critical role in promoting the competitiveness of US environmental technologies and expertise abroad. By helping other countries develop environmental regulatory and enforcement capabilities that drive demand, EPA helps create a market for environmental technology and services overseas. By promoting the upward-harmonization of standards and the implementation of international environmental agreements,

EPA helps "level the playing field" for US business and industry and ensures that US companies do not operate at a competitive disadvantage.¹⁶

In addition to helping rewrite the environmental laws of many countries, EPA sponsors "technology centers" in Poland, Russia, China, the Czech Republic, and the Ukraine that showcase US technology. Their success is measured in dollars: \$5 million in US environment technology with sales agreements for \$25 million more.¹⁷

Contracting with NGOs

In addition to working closely with private, particularly US, business partners, AID channels much of its environmental funding through nongovernmental organizations. The five largest recipients — World Wildlife Fund, The Nature Conservancy, World Environmental Center, World Resources Institute, and Conservation International — operated overseas with \$132 million from AID grants in 1993.¹⁸ In the US, most of this NGO funding goes to a few of the largest and more conservative environmental organizations. These groups are likely to have the international programs and the bureaucratic infrastructure to administer government grants.

14. Fred Hiatt, "US Firms Cash in on Aid Projects," *Washington Post*, Feb. 12, 1995.

15. Alan D. Hecht, "Environmental Export Report," Feb. 1995. Hecht is deputy assistant administrator of EPA's Office of International Activities.

16. *Ibid.*

17. *Ibid.*

18. *Contracts and Grants and Cooperative Agreements with Universities, Firms, and Non-Profit Institutions Active During the Period, Oct. 1, 1992-Sept. 30, 1993* (Washington, DC: AID) FY93.

They are also likely to be comfortable with the ideology, goals, and methods of AID and to support US foreign economic policy, particularly with respect to free trade and economic liberalization. For example, while the Sierra Club, Friends of the Earth and many locally based environmental organizations opposed the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the World Wildlife Fund, Environmental Defense Fund, National Wildlife Federation, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Nature Conservancy echoed the Clinton administration's position: that the agreement would benefit the people and environment of both Mexico and the US.

Academics David Barkin and Stephen Mumme summarized some activities and issues associated with the role of US environmental NGOs (ENGOS):

Over the last two decades, ENGOS have sought direct influence in policy decisions in [low-income countries (LIC)] in matters related to their interests; they have courted and lent support to indigenous ENGOS and built linkages with fledgling organizations devoted to environmental causes; they have lobbied elites in the private sector to intervene on their behalf; they have exerted pressure on their home governments to intervene in LIC environmental management; and they have inserted themselves, with considerable success, into the business of financing environmental policies, whether through debt-for-nature swaps or direct project reviews and lending of the major multilateral development banks.¹⁹

In recent years, the ambitions of these conservative green groups have expanded and their interventionism is more pronounced. "Indeed," concluded Barkin and Mumme, "a number of ENGOS either tacitly or explicitly assume that they enjoy the moral authority and political power to project their influence into the sovereign affairs of LICs."²⁰

This is not to say that NGO involvement in the environmental affairs of other nations is necessarily bad. In many cases, the conservation programs they support and the parks they help

establish are badly needed. The fundamental problem is not so much that the projects are financed by the US-backed ENGOS, but that local organizations and governments often have little authority or input in design or implementation.

The superior resources and information of the ENGOS, together with the clout they get through association with the US government, enable them to set the environmental agendas of other countries. A related problem is that the environmental objectives of most AID-funded NGOs are too narrowly framed and do not reflect the serious social and economic conditions of the affected states.

Shift to the Future

The question, then, of whether it is possible for US government agencies to advance environmental concerns when they are pushing corporate interests is not the only one being raised by critics. Perhaps more crucial is whether the environmental aid and technology transfer programs that the US is so enthusiastically exporting are appropriate to political, social, and economic conditions of Third World countries. And given the general record of US aid programs, that concern is well justified.

While the general failure of past US aid policies is commonly acknowledged in both government and NGO circles, global environmental deterioration has highlighted the unsustainable character of current US and multilateral development projects. Particularly worrisome is support for high levels of chemical inputs in farming, hydroelectric dams, centralized industrial development, and a concentration on agroexport agriculture.

Recognizing that threats to the planet's ecology also represent threats to economic expansion, the world's industrial nations are taking steps to manage the global environment. But rather than targeting the main sources of global pollution and the principal consumers of global resources, they are calling for better management of development in the South.

By stressing the global rather than the local character of the environmental crisis, and by raising alarm about the loss of tropical forests and the rapid rise in the use of fossil fuels in such countries as India, the North has shifted responsibility from itself to the South. Rather than seriously addressing their own rampant consumerism and high per capita energy use, the gov-

ernments of the wealthier nations and institutions push a policy of risk management on the South.

This skewed focus has sparked charges of "green imperialism" or "eco-imperialism." Critics in the South argue that if the world's wealthy countries are so anxious about the planet's environment, they should curtail their own wasteful production before raising alarm about increased pollution in poorer nations.

Other objections from the South are that their environmental priorities are not the same as those of the North and that increased spending on health care and education is more urgent than funding for environmental protection. As Daniel Esty, author of *Greening the GATT*, has concluded, "The failure of industrialized-country environmentalists to build their policies on a foundation that recognized basic human needs in the developing world is the source of much of the North-South tension over trade and environment."²¹

Arguing that all nature is part of the global commons, environmental organizations and governments in the North assume the moral right to intervene abroad to protect flora and fauna in foreign countries. By focusing on the future rather than on the environmental sins of the past and present, the institutions of the North justify policies that place the burden of easing the global environmental crisis on the South. As Vandana Shiva, an analyst of global environmental politics, observed, "Through a shift from the present to the future, the North gains a new political space in which to control the South."²²

Green imperialism is facilitated by the superior financial, informational, and technological resources of the North. Its experts determine the character of the environmental crisis and decree its solutions. Meanwhile, its businesses and nongovernmental organizations, using government revenues, provide the environmental technology and manage the environmental projects. Just as the North sent out legions of experts to chart the course of development, it is now deploying its technology and know-how in the South to help manage the new era of sustainable development. ■

19. David Barkin and Stephen Mumme, "Environmentalists Abroad: Ethical and Policy Implications of Environmental Non-Governmental Organizations," unpublished manuscript, Mar. 1993.

20. *Ibid.*

21. Daniel C. Esty, *Greening the GATT: Trade, Environment, and the Future* (Washington, DC: Institute for International Economics, 1994), p. 185.

22. Shiva, in Wolfgang, *op. cit.*, p. 152.

Insiders Blow the Whistle on Brookhaven Dangers

by Karl Grossman

The radioactive chickens are coming home to roost at Brookhaven National Laboratory (BNL). Set up by the US government in 1947 to look into civilian uses of nuclear technology, its officials and scientists have long promoted all things nuclear. They were instrumental in getting the local utility, the Long Island Lighting Co. (LILCO), to embark on a failed program to build seven or more nuclear power plants — to turn Long Island into a “nuclear park” that would provide the Northeast with electricity. LILCO’s chair to this day is former BNL Assistant Director William Catacosinos.

BNL also has done — and is still doing — military nuclear work. In the 1980s, it was central to planning a nuclear-propelled rocket to loft heavy Star Wars equipment into space and it is now working on accelerator designs to produce tritium for nuclear bombs.

All along, BNL officials and scientists downplayed the dangers of nuclear technology and minimized the effects of radioactivity.

This lack of concern has resulted in massive radioactive and chemical discharges and BNL’s designation as a Superfund high-pollution site by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).¹ Two inside whistle-blowers have stepped forward and charged BNL with disre-



Created to investigate “peaceful uses” of nuclear energy, Brookhaven is an important part of the nuclear weapons research establishment.

gard for public safety. Long Island organizations such as Fish Unlimited, an Island-based national fisheries group, Sound and Hudson Against Atomic Development Alliance (SHAD), and the new Peconic Green Party, have made BNL their major target.

Independent scientists are backing up the activists’ charges with new documentation linking BNL’s emissions to breast cancer mortality in Suffolk County, Long Island, home of the lab. In February, 16 Long Island residents filed a \$1 billion class-action lawsuit charging that radiation discharges from the lab caused cancers and other illness in the community.²

2. Barbara Osarczuk, et al., vs. Associated Universities,

Spreading Radiation

It isn’t that BNL, built on a former army base 44 miles east of Manhattan, is different from other US government nuclear facilities — just worse. According to new research by epidemiologist Dr. Jay M. Gould, based on National Cancer Institute data, communities around major national labs have shown marked increases in age-adjusted breast cancer mortality.³ The result of nuclear operations between 1950 and 1989 at six other facilities was a 35 percent average increase in cancer in surrounding counties — compared to an overall one percent national rise.⁴ The area around Brookhaven, however, was hit hardest. Suffolk County’s 40 percent in-



crease was “the biggest increase in age-adjusted breast cancer mortality during that period for any single large county in the US,” says Gould, author of the just-published *The Enemy Within: The High Cost of Living Near Nuclear Reactors*. Gould found that communities

Inc., “commonly known as Brookhaven National Laboratory.” Index No.: 96-02836 State of New York Supreme Court: Suffolk County.

3. Jay M. Gould, *The Enemy Within: The High Cost of Living Near Nuclear Reactors* (New York/London: Four Walls Eight Windows, 1996).

4. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

Karl Grossman, professor of journalism at the State University of New York/College at Old Westbury, has written extensively on nuclear issues. He is author of *Power Crazy* (New York: Grove Press, 1986); and *Cover Up: What You’re Not Supposed to Know About Nuclear Power* (Sag Harbor, N.Y.: Permanent Press, 1980); and wrote and narrated the 1995 TV documentary *Nukes In Space: The Nuclearization and Weaponization of the Heavens*. 1. BNL’s designation as a Superfund site came in 1989, “primarily due to past operations that have resulted in soil and groundwater contamination that potentially threaten Long Island’s aquifer” (press statement, DoE, Apr. 19, 1996.)

closest to BNL have the most serious cancer problem,⁵ and connected the high incidences to the radioactive poisons BNL routinely discharges into the environment.

From its 30-megawatt and 3-megawatt reactors — the only nuclear reactors on Long Island — and from its other nuclear operations, BNL routinely discharges radioactive poisons — especially cesium-137, strontium-90, and tritium. The Peconic River, with headwaters on the BNL site, contains, as a result, concentrations of these radionuclides.⁶ Tritium has been found in the Peconic at 37 times the proposed Canadian standard. And the radionuclides have been found in nearby wells and in public water supplies. BNL also has emitted — and continues to emit — radionuclides into the air.⁷

Coming Clean

"If people knew about what really goes on at Brookhaven National Laboratory," said Kenneth Dobreenaski, who worked there for 14 years, "they'd make the lab clean its act up—and do it damn fast." A radioactive materials technician, he became so outraged by reckless releases of radioactive material that he went public in early 1996. "There's no accountability at the lab. You have to understand the mentality of some of the scientists there: They'd roll around in a pile of plutonium," he said.⁸

In an incident reminiscent of the Karen Silkwood case, the BNL whistleblower was subsequently ordered into a "hot laboratory" to clean up "contaminated silt." After refusing, Dobreenaski said he was given a hearing before a BNL board and a choice: "Take a demotion, drop to the bottom of the senior-

ity list and get a cut in pay," or quit. He initially chose to stay, but after being "assigned to sit in a little trailer, with no bathroom, with an algebra book all day," he had had enough. After two months of intense harassment, Dobreenaski quit. "[It] got to the point where I couldn't take it anymore," he said.⁹

Joseph Carson, an inspector for the Department of Energy (DoE), which owns BNL, also became a whistleblower as a result of his experiences at the lab. An engineer who served on nuclear-powered submarines and at three commercial nuclear power plants, he encountered what he describes as a "cover-up" in an investigation in which he was assigned by DoE to help examine the cause of a fire at BNL's 30-megawatt reactor.¹⁰

On March 23, 1994, BNL scientists bombarded a piece of uranium-235 with neutrons from the reactor core and 50,000 volts of electricity. They used Plexiglas, a highly flammable plastic, to hold the radioactive element in place. A fire erupted, exposing seven BNL staffers to radiation that also leaked into the air. Carson, who was assigned to investigate the incident, blamed BNL's "lack of compliance" with — and disinterest in — safety procedures.¹¹

It was not the first such incident that Carson investigated at the lab. In 1990, the alternating gradient synchrotron released "a radiation field" which spread over the parking lot. Instead of "figuring out what happened," Carson said, "the next day they repeated the experiment — to see if it would happen again." At other national nuclear laboratories Carson has investigated for DoE, he has often found a culture of "production first, safety second."

But at BNL, it's "experiments first, safety second, third, fourth, fifth or whatever." Since speaking out about the fire at BNL, Carson has encountered intense hostility within DoE.¹²

After radiation spread over the BNL parking lot, scientists repeated the experiment — to see if it would happen again.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 29.

6. New York State Department of Health, "Environmental Radiation in New York State," Albany, N.Y.

7. Suffolk County Department of Health Services, "Monitoring Data Update Brookhaven National Laboratory," Mar. 13, 1996; New York State Department of Health, *op. cit.*; and BNL, *op. cit.* Interview with Dobreenaski, Jan. 1996.

8. Interview, Jan. 1996.

9. Interviews, Feb. and Mar. 1996.

10. Interviews, Dec. 1995. Carson further relates his experiences at BNL and incidents of hostility he has encountered at DoE in a voluminous series of reports and letters he has written to DoE officials including Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary. In an Oct. 29, 1995 letter to O'Leary, Carson said he "refused to go along with a cover-up" of the fire at BNL.

11. Interview, Dec. 1995.

12. *Ibid.*

A Means of Resistance

Long Islanders are organizing to challenge BNL operations. Fish Unlimited got involved in the summer of 1995 after the lab announced a plan to dump hundreds of millions of gallons of chemical- and radioactive-contaminated water into the Peconic River. The river feeds into the Peconic Bay system of Eastern Long Island, an estuarine area attracting marine life. The day before Fish Unlimited filed a lawsuit against BNL, the laboratory abandoned its dumping plan.¹³

"We will no longer tolerate \$500 million a year in taxpayer money [the approximate BNL budget] being used for the poisoning of our air, water, and people," declares Bill Smith, executive director of Fish Unlimited. He calls BNL "a cancer in our community."¹⁴

The SHAD Alliance this year began demonstrating regularly at BNL's entrance. At a protest on the tenth anniversary of the Chernobyl accident, SHAD members carried signs such as: "The Lab Nukes Kids and Other Living Things" and "Remember Chernobyl — It Can Happen Here."

Ron Stanchfield, a founder of the Peconic Green Party, said the group has made BNL its main issue because "it's the most serious problem Long Island faces." The laboratory "has contaminated the environment and the people who live here."¹⁵

All the Way to the Bank

The \$1 billion class-action lawsuit brought against BNL charges that "actions of the defendant were grossly, recklessly and wantonly negligent and were done with an utter disregard for the health, safety, well-being and rights of the plaintiffs." It further accuses BNL of "failure to observe accepted relevant industry standards in the use, storage and disposal of hazardous and toxic substances" and BNL itself of being "improperly located on top of an underground aquifer which supplies drinking water to [a] large number of persons."¹⁶ The underground aquifer is the sole source of potable water for Long Island.

Attorney Richard J. Lippes, whose Buffalo, New York law firm successfully

13. Joe Haberstroh, "Lab Won't Dump Tritium in River, Public Outcry Works Without A Lawsuit," *Newsday*, Oct. 25, 1995, p. 15.

14. Interview, Feb. 1996.

15. Interview, Apr. 1996.

16. Oszarzik, et al., vs. Associated Universities, Inc., *op. cit.*

represented residents of the Love Canal neighborhood, is counsel for the lawsuit along with Charles Rosen and Craig Purcell, last year's president of the Suffolk County Bar Association. In July, BNL sought to have the suit dismissed in New York State Supreme Court, claiming that "air and water are owned by the public" and individuals "can't sue" for its contamination. Lippes' rebuttal began by citing a suit in Justinian Roman times brought because "a piggery polluted the air and water." He commented at one point that the BNL attitude is: "We're the government, we will help you."¹⁷

Giving a very human face to the hearing were the plaintiffs sitting in the courtroom gallery. Barbara Osarczuk, who has lived just outside the BNL boundary for 28 years, blames her thyroid and breast cancer on the laboratory. Her neighborhood is a hotbed of cancer, she said, and BNL has tried "to cover this up."¹⁸

Randy Snell of nearby Manorville said his four-year-old daughter has mouth and throat cancer, which he attributes to BNL. "The more we look into BNL pollution, the more we discover," said Snell, a banker with Citibank.¹⁹

Friends in High Places

Government is doing nothing about the BNL situation — or worse. An attempt by Suffolk County Assemblyman Fred W. Thiele Jr. to get the state legislature to investigate BNL has garnered no support. Meanwhile, Thiele said, on the last day of the legislative session this year, a bill came "flying out," which would have set up a "citizen oversight committee" for BNL. It actually consisted of only one plain citizen, and he is a former lab scientist. Included among the other panel members were BNL Director Dr. Nicholas Samios and

representatives of other government entities.²⁰ "The committee would be packed with the very people responsible for the problem in the first place," Thiele said. Despite the objections of Thiele and other legislators, the bill easily passed.

Another committee set up to investigate BNL, proposed by two Suffolk legislators, would have been chaired by a former lab consultant. Criticism stopped the ex-consultant, Dr. Roger

level, this effort has been aided by contributions from top BNL officials to the coffers of Long Island congressional representatives.²²

Another BNL technique for gaining friends in high places is signing on congressmembers who have lost elections as consultants and lobbyists. After his defeat in 1988, BNL hired Republican Rep. William Carney, whose district included BNL and whose votes favored the BNL agenda. Now an active Wash-

ington lobbyist, he remains on the BNL payroll. After Democrat George Hochbrueckner lost his seat last year, the lab hired him as a consultant. Other former Long Island congressmembers who have become BNL consultants in recent years include Democrats Jerome Ambro and Thomas Downey, who has close links to the Clinton administration.²³ While this kind of revolving door is not illegal, it does offer an example to legislators of what appointments might open to them after they leave office if they are on good terms with the lab.



Community demonstrators denounce Brookhaven's dangerous policies and practices.

Grimson of the State University at Stony Brook, from being chair of the panel; he remains a member.²¹

While those subjected to BNL's radioactive releases take to the streets and courtrooms, the lab continues to shield itself from public scrutiny and governmental oversight. On the federal

When it comes to dealing with the public, BNL scientists adhere to their longstanding policy of denying the dangers of nuclear technology and radiation. A BNL flier given out at a recent public hearing declared: "We live in a radioactive world — radiation is all around us and is part of our natural environment."

It then asks people to "compute your radiation dose" by checking out exposure from a chest X-ray, an airplane flight, cosmic radiation, and "if you sleep in a double bed with your spouse."

In comparison, says the flier, "if you live at the BNL site boundary, drink groundwater from the area and eat

"You have to understand the mentality of some of the scientists there: They'd roll around in a pile of plutonium."

17. Oral argument before Justice Howard Berler in State Supreme Court, Riverhead, N.Y., June 27, 1996.

18. Interview, June 27, 1996.

19. Interview, June 27, 1996.

20. Interview, July 1996.

21. See Laura Flanders, "Brookhaven National Lab: The Cancer Connection," *CAQ*, Winter 1994-95, p. 60.

22. Filings with New York State Board of Elections.

23. Acknowledgments by BNL's Public Affairs Office.

IN MEMORIAM: SEAN DAVID GERVASI

CAQ is deeply saddened by the untimely death of Sean Gervasi, a renowned economist, teacher, and writer, who had been a frequent contributor to this magazine and its predecessor, *CounterSpy*, since the mid-1970s. Gervasi, 63, died suddenly of stomach cancer on June 17, in Belgrade, where he had been teaching.

Sean Gervasi studied at Geneva, Oxford, and Cornell. After the Bay of Pigs invasion, he quit his job at the Bureau of the Budget to begin a long career as a progressive and iconoclastic academic and activist, becoming a leader of the anti-Vietnam War movement in England. After teaching at Oxford, Cambridge, and the London School of Economics, he spent 15 years at the UN, much of it assisting Seán MacBride at the Committee on Decolonization, the Center Against Apartheid, and the Commission for Namibia, as the head of which MacBride received both the Nobel Peace Prize and the Lenin Peace Prize.

During that period Gervasi uncovered the secret and illegal sale of US weapons to South Africa, which he exposed in a widely circulated 1976 article in *CounterSpy*. Over the years, he painstakingly documented the role of the CIA in the Third World, including efforts to remove MacBride as Commissioner. He was the first to describe in detail the CIA's secret media budget, in CAQ in 1980. His seminal article on the destabilization of the Soviet Union, published in CAQ in 1990, continues to be cited for its clarity and its prescience.

Gervasi was an adviser to a number of African, Middle Eastern, and Caribbean governments, and for the past several years had been immersed in analyzing events in Yugoslavia, including the massive misinformation and disinformation in the world press, particularly against the Serbian people.

Sean Gervasi is survived by his wife, Heather Cottin, his son Alexander Gervasi, and his daughter, Nora Cottin Gervasi. We extend our profound condolences to his loving family. His wit and humor, as well as his insight, will be sorely missed. ■

(Brookhaven, continued)

fish from the Peconic River," your radiation dose would be just a fraction of that.²⁴ Andrew Hull, former long-time supervisor of radiological monitoring at BNL and a leader of Suffolk Scientists for Cleaner Power & Safer Environment, which worked with LILCO in pushing its nuclear power plant program, has argued that BNL radioactive discharges were "within acceptable limits" — the continuing basic argument of BNL in justifying its emissions.²⁵

Gould counters: "The problem is that no one really knows the true health effects on humans of years of chronic exposures to low levels of such radioactive fission products."²⁶ And, "We must understand," he says, "that the US federal agencies responsible for our radioactive standards operated under great pressure to set them at extremely high levels in order to win public acceptance for nuclear operations considered vital for national security reasons."²⁷ Hull and his BNL colleagues have gone public with their accepting stance toward radioactivity.

Hull, with other BNL scientists, was a member of the government's "radiological emergency response team" which goes to nuclear accidents around the nation and determines their seriousness. In that capacity he investigated the accident at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant and, in a speech back at BNL, described it as "relatively minor, ... a big media event."²⁸

"How dare they!" declared Dr. Helen Caldicott about BNL and its radioactive discharges in a recent speech, "Danger in Paradise" sponsored by Catholic Charities and Fish Unlimited. A founder and president of Physicians for Social Responsibility and a new Suffolk County resident, she has made BNL a major target. "You can't do dangerous things on top of an enclosed water supply," she said. BNL "shouldn't be there."²⁹

She concluded by telling the 250 Long Islanders present: "Shut down Brookhaven!"³⁰ ■

24. Brookhaven National Laboratory, "Compute Your Radiation Dose," Jan. 1996.

25. Interview, Feb. 1986, cited in Grossman, *Power Crazy*, p. 180.

26. Jay Gould, "Are Long Island Drinking Water Standards Safe?" paper, July 8, 1996.

27. Jay Gould, "What Are 'Safe' Standards for Long Island Drinking Water?" paper, Mar. 1996.

28. Brookhaven *Bulletin*, Sept. 21, 1979, p. 1.

29. "Danger in Paradise" by Dr. Helen Caldicott, Stella Maris School, Sag Harbor, N.Y., speech, Aug. 12, 1996. Videotape of speech is available from LTV, Industrial Road, East Hampton, N.Y. 11937 (516) 537-2777.

30. *Ibid.*

(Global Crime, cont. from p. 30)

their external debt. In turn, the off-shore banks rake in profits as they discreetly tout the advantages of "asset protection" and fail to discriminate between clean and dirty money. Banking institutions with links to organized crime or money laundering operations "create" clean money from the profits on deposits of dirty money. They then use the laundered funds to control real and financial resources. By recycling their criminal money to the legal economy, known criminals become renowned corporate executives and financiers.

This system of global trade and finance has fostered an unprecedented accumulation of private wealth alongside the impoverishment of large sectors of the world population, and prospects for change are dim. Big business and criminal organizations operating at a world level share the same regulatory environment. Laws which protect the former also protect the latter. The banking system allows corporations, wealthy individuals, and criminals to conceal their wealth. Under the motto "no questions asked," banks plead ignorance and boast good faith while shielding organized crime and organized capital alike from public inquiry and prosecution. Major international commercial banks not only constitute an outlet for money laundering for which they exact commission fees, they also provide credit at high rates of interest to the criminal mafia, often to the detriment of legal agriculture and manufacturing.

Vested interests are so entrenched in this system that formal changes in the gamut of banking regulations are unlikely to effect fundamental reform. The ability — and the will — of governments and of international institutions to curb the criminal economy on behalf of society is seriously compromised since those with the power to make changes are often well-served by the status quo. In the words of a UN report, "international law enforcement is at best a holding action. ... [U]nless there is simultaneous advance in economic and social development, organized crime on a pervasive and global scale is likely to be with us to stay."⁴⁵ ■

45. UN, *op cit.*, p. 3.

AIDS: Conspiracy or Unnatural Disaster?

Tracking the Real Genocide



by David Gilbert

Theories that AIDS is a government conspiracy to destroy undesirable populations may make political sense, but are they supported by fact?

AIDS has an uncanny knack for attacking people the dominant society considers "undesirables": gays, injection drug users (IDUs), prisoners, and people of color. The commonly cited US statistic — that African Americans have twice the AIDS rate as white

David Gilbert has been involved in the struggle against racism and imperialism since the early 1960s. He is currently serving a life sentence in New York State on charges of participating, as a white ally of the Black Liberation Army, in the 1981 Brinks robbery and shoot-out with police. Since 1986, he has been a leading activist and educator on AIDS in prison. This article is dedicated to Kuwasi Balagoon, a Black Liberation Army warrior with a giant heart, who died of AIDS on Dec. 13, 1986. Many thanks to friends and comrades who read and critiqued the first draft; additional special thanks to Jane Stavnezer, Brother King Allah, Vicki Legion, and Anthony Cisco. Photo: New York's Lower East Side is typical of areas where urban devastation and lack of services create public health disasters. Hazel Hankin/Impact Visuals.

Americans — understates the problem because it is based on the total number of cases since 1981. While white gay men constituted the large majority of cases in the early days, by the early 1990s the rate of new cases among Latinos was 2.5 times higher than among whites, and the black/white ratio was even starker at 5-1 for men and 15-1 for women.¹ By 1993, AIDS had become the leading cause of death among African Americans between the ages of 25 and 44.² Internationally, the

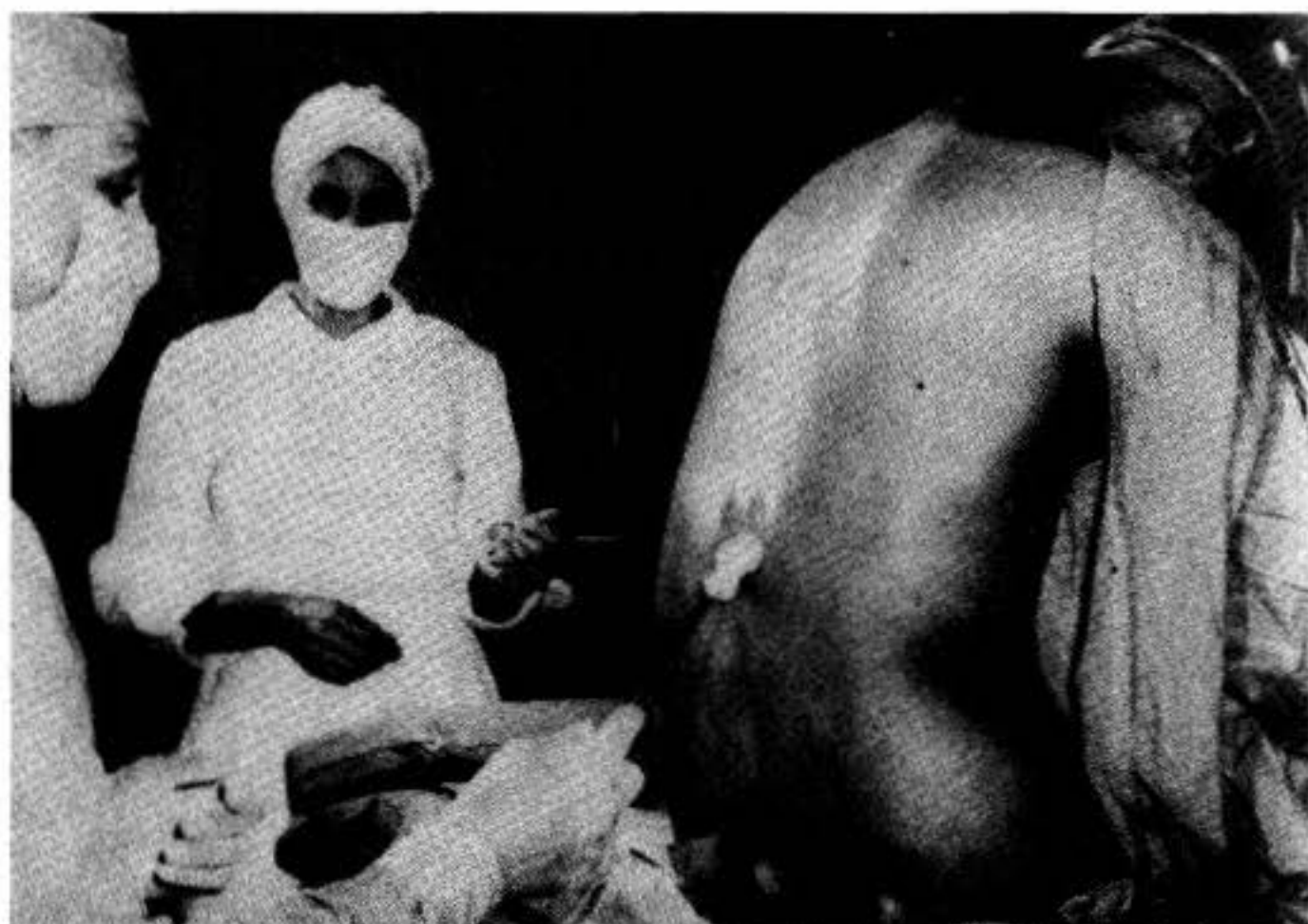
1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) report, Mar. 1993; and CDC figures reported in the *New York Times*, Sept. 9, 1994. There may have been many early cases which went undiagnosed because they occurred among IDUs—particularly Black and Latino—who lacked access to decent medical care.
2. "Minorities Seek More Action to Halt AIDS Spread," *New York Times*, Sept. 10, 1994.

racial disparity is even worse: About 80 percent of the world's 9 million AIDS deaths through 1995 have occurred in Africa, where 2 million children have already been orphaned.³

An Almost Perfect Fit

The correlation between AIDS and social and economic oppression is clear and powerful. What is more, the pattern

3. Figures are based on correlating the Aug. 1994 report (at the World Conference on AIDS, in Japan) by the Global AIDS Policy Coalition and the update of their figures cited in H. Osborne, "The Unbeliever," *New York Times Book Review*, Apr. 7, 1996, p. 8. Global Coalition estimates are somewhat higher—and in my opinion probably more accurate—than official figures from the World Health Organization. Figure on orphans based on 1992 estimate of 1.3 million in J. Mann, D. Tarantola, and T. Netter, eds., *AIDS in the World* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1992), p. 90. The death toll has more than doubled since then.



CDC performs spinal tap (1933) in Tuskegee experiment; and (l.) certificate for subjects still alive in 1950s.

U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

25

This certificate is awarded to

In grateful recognition of 25 years
of active participation in the
Tuskegee medical research study.



Awarded 1958

Surgeon General

meshes neatly with an extensive history of chemical and biological warfare (CBW) and medical experiments which have targeted people of color, Third World populations, prisoners, and other unsuspecting individuals. In the first North American example of CBW, early European settlers used smallpox-infected blankets as a weapon of genocide against Native Americans. A few centuries later, the US Army conducted hundreds of tests that released "harmless" bacteria, viruses, and other agents in populated areas; one was to determine how a fungal agent thought mainly to affect black people would spread. Washington also subsidized the pre-marketing tests of birth control pills—before a safe dosage was determined—on Puerto Rican and Haitian women who

were not warned of the potentially severe side effects. Since the 1940s, the US has conducted 154 tests on 9,000 people — soldiers, mental patients, prisoners — many of whom had no idea of the risks involved.⁴ On another level, the drug plague in the ghettos and barrios — whether by intent or not — has the effect of chemical warfare against these communities.

The most apposite example is the four decade-long Tuskegee syphilis study. Starting in 1932, under US Public Health Service auspices, about 400 black men in rural Alabama were subjects in an experiment on the effects of untreated syphilis. They were never told the nature of their condition or that they could infect their wives and children. Although penicillin, which became available in the 1940s, was the standard of treatment for syphilis by 1951, researchers not only withheld treatment but forbade the men from seeking help elsewhere. This shameful "experiment" was stopped in 1972, only after a federal health worker who was involved blew the whistle.⁵

4. *New York Times*, Feb. 10, 1995. For an excellent summary of US CBW, see Bob Lederer, *Covert Action Information Bulletin*, n. 28, Summer 1987.

5. Stephen B. Thomas and Sandra Crouse Quinn, "The Tuskegee Syphilis Study, 1932 to 1972: Implications for HIV Education and AIDS Risk Reduction Programs in the Black Community," *American Journal of Public Health*, 81:11, Nov. 1991, p. 1501. For an in-depth discussion of the Tuskegee experiments, see James Jones, *Bad Blood: The Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment* (New York: The Free Press, 1981).

Nor is experimentation on people of color a thing of the past. Beginning in 1989, 1,500 children in West and East Los Angeles and Inglewood were given an experimental measles vaccine as part of a government-sponsored trial. Most of the subjects were Latino or African American. The parents of these children were never told that they were part of an experiment with an unlicensed drug, and thus had a less than adequate basis for giving their consent. The Edmonston-Zagreb, or E-Z vaccine, was also tested in Senegal and Guinea-Bissau and Haiti, Guinea, and more than a dozen other Third World countries. Trials in Los Angeles, conducted with the cooperation of Kaiser Permanente, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Johns Hopkins University, were stopped two years later after questions were raised about the vaccine's relationship to an increased death rate among female infants.

When use of the experimental drug came to light, CDC Director Dr. David Satcher noted, "A mistake was made. It shocked me. ... But things sometimes fall through the cracks." Dr. Stephen Hadler, director of the epidemiology and surveillance division of the CDC's national immunization program, said that although researchers have not confirmed a causal association between the more potent dose of E-Z vaccine and the deaths, "it was enough to make the World Health Organization say that high doses of the vaccine should no longer be considered for use in kids." It should be emphasized, he told the *Los Angeles Times*, that the deaths occurred

The false conspiracy theories are themselves a contributing factor to the terrible toll of unnecessary AIDS deaths.

among children living in poor countries, many of whom were malnourished and did not have access to adequate health care. Hadler did not, however, emphasize that those same conditions are all too common in the US.

In light of this gruesome pattern and pervasive evidence in every corner of society that the lives of blacks are less valued, there are good reasons why so many prisoners as well as a significant

portion of the African American community believe that government scientists deliberately created AIDS as a tool of genocide.

Dangerous To Your Health

There is only one problem with this almost perfect fit: It is not true. The theories on how HIV—the virus that causes AIDS—was purposely spliced together in a lab—wilt under scientific scrutiny. Moreover, these conspiracy theories divert energy from the work that must be done in the trenches if marginalized communities are to survive this epidemic: grassroots education, mobilizations for AIDS prevention, and better care for people living with HIV. They distract from the urgent need to focus a spotlight on the life-and-death issue of AIDS prevention and on the crucial struggle against a racist and profit-driven public health system that is responsible for tens of thousands of unnecessary deaths.

After more than nine years doing AIDS education in prison, I have found these conspiracy myths to be the main internal obstacle—in terms of prisoners' consciousness—to implementing risk reduction strategies. A recent study at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, confirmed that African Americans who believe in the conspiracy theories are significantly less likely to use condoms or to be tested for HIV. Put bluntly: The false conspiracy theories are themselves a contributing factor to the terrible toll of unnecessary AIDS deaths. What's the use, believers ask, of making all the hard choices to avoid spreading or contracting the disease if the government is going to find a way to infect people anyway? And what's the point of all the hassles of safer sex, or all the inconvenience of not sharing needles if HIV can be spread, as many conspiracy theorists claim, by casual contact such as sneezing or handling dishes?

The core of the mind-set that undermines prevention efforts is "denial." People whose activities have put them at risk of HIV are often petrified and turn to conspiracy theories as a hip and

seemingly militant rationale for not confronting their own dangerous practices. At the same time, such theories provide an apparently simple and satisfying alternative to the complex challenge of dealing with the myriad of social, behavioral, and medical factors that propel the epidemic.

While convinced that humans did not design HIV, my main concern here is not to disprove the conspiracy theories. Neither do I attempt to solve the problem of the origins of AIDS or even re-

tailed critique may skip to the section beginning with "The Real Genocide," which discusses the system that made these theories so plausible and that abets—as part of its routine functioning—the spread of AIDS to "undesirable" communities.

Scientific Unraveling

An early version of the AIDS-as-biowarfare theory was based on the work of two East German scientists, Jakob and Lilli Segal, published by the Soviet



JIM TYNAN/IMPACT VISUALS

Rikers Island's new contagious disease unit for inmates with TB and other diseases.

view the many different theories and approaches to that question. The origin of this disease, as of many others, is likely to remain unsolved for years to come.⁶

Rather, the article examines the validity of one set of theories being widely propagated to prisoners and to African American communities: that HIV was deliberately spliced together in a lab as a weapon of genocide. What follows is a look at the major flaws in, and political agenda of, the major conspiracy theories. Readers uninterested in this de-

6. Various theories of AIDS origins include a virus that jumped species, an accidental byproduct of biological warfare experiments on animals, a new viral mutation, and a virus that lived in an isolated ecological niche until new social conditions facilitated the explosion of an epidemic. There is also a set of theories based on the now highly dubious proposition that HIV does not cause AIDS. For an excellent discussion of HIV's likely history and the social factors that facilitated the explosion of the epidemic, see Gabriel Rotello, "The Birth of AIDS," *OUT*, Apr. 1994.

news agency Tass on March 30, 1987. The Segals claimed that HIV could not have evolved naturally, being in fact an artificial splice between visna virus (a retrovirus that infects the nervous system of sheep) and HTLV-1 (the first retrovirus known to infect humans).⁷ This splice, they asserted, was created at the notorious CBW lab at Fort Detrick, Maryland, and then tested on prisoners in the area.

Finding the article politically credible, I sent it to Janet Stavnezer, a friend and long-time supporter of the civil rights and anti-war movements,

7. HIV (human immunodeficiency virus) is one of the subset of viruses known as retroviruses. A retrovirus stores its genetic information in the form of a single-stranded RNA instead of the more usual double-stranded DNA. Only after the retrovirus penetrates the host cell does it construct a DNA version of its genes, using a special enzyme called reverse transcriptase.

The AIDS Holocaust in Africa



Ugandan women with HIV are part of a public education project.

William Campbell Douglass, M.D.'s theories on AIDS provide a rational for writing off Africa as a lost cause. Referring to a 1986 article in *Science*,¹ he repeatedly claims that "75 million Africans became infected, *practically simultaneously*." (His emphasis, p. 83) In fact, the article never mentions 75 million, but estimates (p. 962) "several" (i.e., two to ten) million over the course of five years. (p. 962) By flagrantly exaggerating the situation, Douglass depicts Africa as beyond hope and undermines those fighting to channel world health resources for AIDS medical care and prevention in Africa.²

The reality is horrific enough. WHO estimates that by early 1995, the world toll reached 20 million HIV infections, 6 million cumulative cases of AIDS, 4.5 million AIDS deaths. About two-thirds of these HIV infections and three-quarters of those AIDS cases occurred in Africa.³ The Global AIDS Policy Coalition offers figures that are somewhat higher, and probably more accurate: 1.3 million Africans died of AIDS in 1995 alone, bringing the cumulative death toll there to 7.6 million.

Douglass uses his fabricated figure of 75 million and his unsupportable assertion that all were infected at the same time to bolster his conspiracy theory that WHO created the epidemic. This nonsense diverts attention from analyzing the real reasons why AIDS has struck Africa with such ferocity: a centuries-long history of Western imperialism and neo-colonialism that have drained and crippled the continent. As Dr. Pierce M'Pele, director of Congo's anti-AIDS program, puts it: "It is undeniable that AIDS is a disease that comes with poverty."⁴

The consequences of poverty in Africa are life and death. Because of lack of money to screen blood supplies, 300,000 Africans a year contract HIV from blood transfusions.⁵ Many more have been infected through health clinics that cannot afford disposable needles and have to reuse contaminated ones.⁶ And perhaps most serious of all, is the high rate of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs) which go untreated as a direct result of the lack of the most basic public health resources. A recent

Tanzanian study showed that proper treatment for STDs reduces HIV by 42 percent.⁷

These conditions flow not only from historical exploitation but also from current power relations. The structural adjustment programs imposed by the World Bank and IMF mandate that governments spend money on external debt payments rather than on social services. They also skew the economies toward export industries and agriculture and force job-seekers to migrate far from home and family for extended periods. This social dislocation has been linked to increases in STDs.

Uganda is typical; it spends just \$3 a person a year on health care compared to \$17 a person on debt payment.⁸ But in another way, this east African country is atypical. Despite the poverty, community initiatives and government education on prevention have resulted in a major decline in new HIV infections.⁹ Given this courageous start by people in Uganda, think what they could accomplish with a workable public health budget.

The crimes around AIDS are just one part of a global economic order in which 14 million children die from hunger and easily preventable diseases each year, where 2 billion people are illiterate, and where 1.5 billion people have little or no access to health care.¹⁰ The world has failed to marshal even 10 percent of the \$2.5 billion a year that WHO says is needed to mount an effective prevention campaign throughout the Third World. Compare that sum to the more than \$40 billion a year these same countries lose in debt payments to banks in the US, Europe, and Japan. US failure to pay any of its 1995 assessment of \$104 million — one quarter of WHO's budget — has gutted that agency's already grossly inadequate program of assistance to vulnerable and impoverished countries. Meanwhile, more than 2.7 million human beings worldwide are newly infected with HIV every year.¹¹

Douglass would have us believe that Africa was essentially already murdered by 1981 and send us chasing the WHO bogeyman. In contrast, the urgent need is to stop the murders *in progress* to save lives in Africa by attacking the real source of the problem — global exploitation and the misuse of resources. ■

1. T. Quinn, et al., "AIDS in Africa: An Epidemiologic Paradigm," *Science*, Nov. 21, 1986, p. 959.

2. Page references are to William Campbell Douglass, *AIDS: The End of Civilization* (Brooklyn: A & B Books, 1992); and see David Gilbert, "There is a Holocaust of Unspeakable Dimensions in Progress in Africa," *Downtown*, Nov. 10, 1993.

3. "WHO Reports Million Have HIV," *AIDS Weekly*, Dec. 25, 1995; and Jan. 1, 1996, pp. 10-11.

4. "Funding Initiated to Help Scientists Research AIDS," *AIDS Weekly*, Dec. 4, 1995, pp. 27-28.

5. *Ibid.*

6. Quinn, *op. cit.*, p. 959. By reusing needles, vaccination campaigns could have inadvertently contributed to the spread of AIDS, but to a limited extent since studies show those campaigns were more likely to have sterile needles than various local medical facilities and practitioners.

7. H. Grosskurth, et al., "Impact of Improved Treatment for Sexually Transmitted Diseases in Rural Tanzania," *The Lancet*, 346: 530-36, Aug. 1995.

8. Paul Lewis, "World Bank Moves to Cut Poorest Nations' Debts," *New York Times*, Mar. 16, 1996.

9. James McKinley Jr., "A Ray of Light in Africa's Struggle with AIDS," *New York Times*, Apr. 7, 1996.

10. Fidel Castro, "Summit for Social Development," speech, Copenhagen, Mar. 11, 1995.

11. Estimate by the UN Joint Program on HIV/AIDS, cited in *New York Times*, June 7, 1996. They give the figure in the form of 7,500 new HIV infections per day.

who is a professor of molecular genetics and microbiology specializing in immunology. Her response was unequivocal: The Segals' splice theory is scientifically impossible.

A few years later, as *perestroika* spread, the Soviet Union withdrew these charges — whether out of good science or good diplomacy is unknown. In any case, by then, even non-scientists had noted flaws. For example, there was an obvious error of US geography. The Segals had speculated that the Maryland prisoners, once released, congregated in New York City, which then became the seedbed of the epidemic. But most Maryland prisoners would have returned to Baltimore, or Washington, DC — neither of which was an early center of AIDS.

Since the Segals, there have been a number of related theories that HIV was artificially created by splicing two existing viruses. One, set at Fort Detrick, puts the date back to 1967; another implicates the World Health Organization (WHO), starting in 1972. Stavnezer and Mulder debunk these theories by showing that none of the viruses posited in the various splice theories has nearly enough genetic similarity (homology) with HIV to be one of its parents.⁸

Investigative journalist Bob Lederer conducted a separate inquiry into AIDS conspiracy theories for *CovertAction Information Bulletin* in 1987. One of his prime sources, Dr. David Dubnau, a long-time activist against CBW, was emphatic: The HIV splice theorists "are simply wrong," he said, and offered the same explanation as Stavnezer and Mulder. Lederer had written in the 1987 article that the various non-splice theories of dissemination were plausible. Recently, in light of current knowledge, he has revised his conclusion and determined that "None of the AIDS as CBW theories [including the non-splice theories] really holds up."⁹

8. All references to Stavnezer's analysis, as well as to her colleague at the University of Massachusetts who specializes in virology — Professor of Molecular Genetics and Microbiology Dr. Caryl Mulder — come from personal correspondence and discussions.

9. Interviews, 1994-96; see Lederer, *op. cit.*, p. 47. A different set of CBW theories posits that HIV is not the cause of AIDS. But, while true that other possible co-factors with HIV (e.g., drug use and/or germs such as "mycoplasmas" and/or past infections that weaken the immune system) have not been given enough attention, the scientific evidence for HIV as a prime causative agent is now extremely convincing. Retrospective studies of stored blood samples show patients infected with HIV long before any other known event might be responsible for breakdown of their immune systems.

Needing a vehicle for the deliberate dissemination of the allegedly spliced virus, the conspiracy theorists also characterize vaccination programs (against smallpox in Africa, hepatitis-B among gay men in the US, and polio in various places) as examples of a CBW campaign. While vaccination programs with inadequate controls for contamination may have contributed to the spread of the infection, they could not have been a prime cause: The geography of the vaccination campaigns does not correspond with the locations of early centers of AIDS.¹⁰ Meanwhile, such unsubstantiated rumors can dangerously discourage people here and in the Third World from getting the same protection for their children that have done so much to stop diseases for more privileged whites.

There is another telling problem with the theories: timing. HIV almost certainly arose well before scientists had any reason to consider retroviruses as possible CBW agents to destroy the human immune system. The first human retrovirus (HTLV-1) was not discovered until 1977, and could not immediately be linked to any disease. Through the end of the 1970s the search for human retroviruses was propelled by speculation

The stonewall of calculated ignorance and denial that blacks face every day is a fine surface on which to write conspiracies.

that they might cause cancer, not that they would target the immune system.

Since the epidemiological evidence shows AIDS in several countries in 1978,¹¹ HIV (a virus with a long incubation period), had to exist at least a few years before that. And it is probably considerably older. Retrospective tests on 1,129 blood samples taken in 1971-72 from US injection drug users found that 14 were HIV positive.¹² There are also cases of patients who died of AIDS-defining illnesses decades ago: a teenager in St. Louis in 1968, a sailor in England in 1959, and a Norwegian

10. See T. Quinn, *et al.*, *op. cit.*

11. Lederer, *op. cit.*, p. 47; Laurie Garrett, *The Coming Plague* (New York: Penguin Books, 1995), pp. 291, 297, 350, 381.

12. Garrett, *op. cit.*, p. 363.

sailor, his wife and child in the late 1960s. Preserved tissue and blood samples from all of these cases later tested positive for HIV antibodies, although the more difficult direct tests failed to find the virus itself.¹³

Medical case histories going back to the 1930s — the earliest period in which accurate records were kept — show isolated cases with all the earmarks of AIDS. Various analyses of the DNA sequences — a technique used for broad assessment of a specie's age — have provided estimates for the age of HIV that range from 30-900 years.¹⁴

In brief, the lack of knowledge of any human retroviruses before the late 1970s and the compelling evidence for the earlier genesis of HIV virtually eliminate the possibility that scientists deliberately designed such a germ to destroy the human immune system. More specifically, and decisively, Stavnezer and Dubnau independently confirm that all the alleged splices are in fact impossible because HIV does not have nearly enough genetic similarity to any of the proposed parent viruses.

Shyster Science

The most common source of the conspiracy theories circulating in New York State prisons is William Campbell Douglass, M.D.¹⁵ His article "WHO Murdered Africa," (referring to the World Health Organization), and his book *AIDS: The End of Civilization*, are prime sources for many black community militants and prisoners who embrace the conspiracy theory out of a sincere

desire to fight genocide. But Douglass, who is white, expresses little concern for black lives. He instead states his purpose as being the defense of Western civilization, and describes his politics as "conservative" — which turns out to be quite an understatement for his ultra-right-wing political agenda.

Douglas taps into the font of mistrust created by the arrogance and glibness of establishment science. Quick acceptance of the still unproven African green monkey theory was especially suspect and led many people to react against the presumptions of main-

13. *Ibid.*, pp. 364-65, 380.

14. For a fuller discussion see Rotello, *op. cit.*

15. "WHO Murdered Africa," *Health Freedom News*, Sept. 1987; and *AIDS: The End of Civilization* (Brooklyn: A & B Books, 1992).

Strategies for Fighting AIDS

Grass roots public health education and mobilization, including:

- extensive peer-led programs in prisons, schools, and communities;
- thorough and responsible sex education in the homes, schools and other institutional settings for youth, along with more and accessible STD clinics; and
- general access to NEPs, and much more intensive and culturally relevant anti-drug education.

A reallocation of public resources, now being lavishly squandered on the super rich and corporations to:

- stop lethal public health and environmental conditions with programs that respond to initiative and leadership within the Black, Latino, and poor communities;
- make medicine and social services for survival needs universally available; and
- emphasize treatment and research for AIDS and the host of other poverty- and racism-linked health problems.

International solidarity with the people of Africa, including an end to the debt payments, along with reparations so that they can mount the health campaigns needed against the scourges now threatening millions. ■

stream medicine. Douglass' alternative, however, is a bizarre cocktail of half-truths, distortions, and lies. He fails to recognize a basic distinction in epidemiology—between the *cause* of AIDS (a virus) and a *means of transmission* (dirty needles) (p. 171). He evidently thinks that all RNA viruses are retroviruses (p. 230), which is like thinking that all fruits are citrus. And his pronouncements on the possibility of transmission by insects display fundamental ignorance of the science involved.¹⁶ There is also something radically wrong with his statistics; he offers five different figures for the number of HIV-infected people in the US (pp. 53, 60, 63, 168, 170) without trying to reconcile the variations. He also "proves" that HIV is a splice of two other viruses by comparing shapes, as depicted in his own crude sketches (p. 231), when the scientific method for determining the degree of relatedness of different viruses is to make a detailed comparison of the sequence of the base pairs of nucleic acid in the DNA. Such an analysis disproves the splice theory.

Fraudulent "Science"

Douglass goes beyond mere distortion when he reaches the core of his conspiracy. His "smoking gun" is an article from the *Bulletin of the World Health*

Organization. In a blatant distortion of the 1972 article,¹⁷ Douglass claims that the World Health Organization called for the engineering of a retrovirus to cause AIDS. He is unequivocal: WHO is talking about "*retroviruses*" and is asking scientists to "*attempt to make a hybrid virus that would be deadly to humans. ... That's AIDS*." What the WHO is saying in plain English is 'Let's cook up a virus that selectively destroys the T-cell system of man, an acquired immune deficiency.'¹⁸ (Emphasis in original.) He presents an almost identical description in his book. (p. 80)

Aside from the unlikelihood of conspirators' publishing their evil plans, Douglass' characterization borders on fraud. The WHO article in question is *not* primarily about retroviruses; it is *not* at all about engineering new viruses; it *never* discusses making hybrids; and it is absolutely *not* about making a virus to destroy the human immune system. Anyone who takes the time to look at the original will find that it details a number of existing viruses that cause various illnesses in humans and other mammals. Evidence was emerging by 1972 that some of these viruses, in addition to their direct damage, impacted the immune system. The only call the article makes is to study these secondary effects. He offers only one quote from the original. Not only

does he change the context, he omits the list of viruses under study.¹⁹ All the listed viruses were related to already recognized illnesses; most are not retroviruses; none is a retrovirus that affects humans; and none is a suspect in any of the proposed scenarios for HIV-splicing. Douglass has created a bogeyman out of thin air.

Deadly Lies

Douglass' disinformation becomes a deadly threat when he discredits the very prevention measures needed to save lives: "It is possible," he wrote, "that even the government propaganda concerning intravenous drug use is a red herring. If the intravenous route is the easiest way to catch AIDS, why does it take as long as five to seven years for some recipients of contaminated blood to come down with AIDS?" (p. 171) Here, he seems to forget the well-established incubation period between infection with HIV and onset of AIDS, although he manages to remember it later when he refers to a "latency" period of 10 years. (p. 245)

And arguing that there isn't a perfect correlation between the number of acts of intercourse and infection, he declares "AIDS is not a sexually transmitted disease." (p. 243)

Then, after sabotaging prevention efforts by disparaging the well-established danger of needle sharing and unprotected sex, Douglass fuels hysteria with claims that AIDS can be contracted by casual contact. "The common cold is a virus," he says in his article. "Have you ever had a cold? How did you catch it?" By failing to differentiate between airborne and bloodborne viruses, he is conjuring up a scare tactic as scientific as a warning that your hand will be chomped off if you put it in a goldfish bowl because, after all, a shark is a fish. He also asserts, citing no evidence, that "the AIDS virus can live for as long as 10 days on a dry plate," and then asks, "so, are you worried about your salad in a restaurant that employs homosexuals?" People are understandably skeptical of government reassurances on any matter. But we can turn instead to the experiences of families of people with AIDS and of grassroots AIDS activists: There are hundreds of thousands of us who have worked closely with infected people for years without catching the virus. The unwarranted fears about cas-

16. All page references are to his book. For an explanation of the actual factors involved, see "Can Mosquitoes Transmit AIDS?" *Natural History*, July 1992, p. 54.

17. A. Allison, et al., *WHO Bulletin*, (47:1, pp. 257-64).

18. Douglass, *WHO Murdered...*, op. cit.

19. Allison, op. cit., p. 259.

ual contact deter sorely needed support for our brothers and sisters living with HIV infection and divert attention from the most common means of transmission: unprotected sex and shared drug injection equipment.

Reactionary Politics

Despite the apparent irrationality, there is a coherence to Douglass' distortions and fabrications. They are driven by an ultra-right-wing political agenda that goes back to the 1960s, when he was a member of the John Birch Society and ran a phone line spouting a 90-second "patriotic message." In it, Douglass railed against the civil rights movement and denounced the National Council of Churches and three presidents as part of a "Communist conspiracy." Among the nuggets he offered callers in at least 30 US cities was the likelihood "that those three civil rights workers [presumably Schwerner, Chaney, and Goodman] in Mississippi were kidnaped and murdered by their own kind to drum up sympathy for their cause." In another message, he predicted that "The Civil Rights Act will turn America into a Fascist state practically overnight."²⁰

Two decades later he was blaming gays for AIDS in *The Spotlight*, the organ of the ultra-right-wing Liberty Lobby, for which he wrote regularly and in which he ran advertisements for "The Douglass Protocol," his cure-all medical clinics. In 1987, he wrote, "some have suggested that the FDA is waiting for the majority of the homosexuals to die off before releasing ribavirin," a drug he was at the time promoting as a miracle cure for AIDS. Douglass, however, opposed withholding a "suppressed" cure, "although I feel very resentful of the homosexuals because of the holocaust they have brought on us."²¹ Later Douglass began promoting a strange cure-all treatment (pp. 251-52), photoluminescence, in which small amounts of blood are drawn, irradiated with ultraviolet light, and reinjected. Treatments at his Clayton, Georgia, clinic can span several weeks and cost thousands of dollars.²²

By 1992, when he wrote *AIDS: End of Civilization*, he saw AIDS as part of the

"entire mosaic of the current attack against western civilization" (p. 14); the term "western" being a thinly veiled code word for "white." He had also shifted blame from homosexuals to communists, and portrayed AIDS as a diabolical plot perpetrated by WHO, which "is run by the Soviets." (p. 118) In these later writings, Douglass weaves an elaborate and intricate plot describing how the communists — much like an invading virus — took over the machinery of the US Army's CBW labs at Ft. Detrick and the US National Institutes of Health in order to use them to create and propagate HIV.

Douglass is so mired in anticommunism that he fails to revise this scenario for his 1992 edition — after the collapse of the Soviet Union. He even charges that a Russian, Dr. Sergei Litvinov, headed WHO's AIDS control program in the late 1980s, when, in fact, it was led by an American, Jonathan Mann, whose writings Douglass cites favorably on a number of occasions.

In the guise of a program against AIDS, Douglass proposes a basket full of policies favored by the ultra-right and neo-Nazis: support and strengthen the powers of local law enforcement (p. 139);

ing people unreachable for prevention, contact notification, and care. And here is the final appeal in his book: "[I]t appears that regulation of social behavior, as much as we hate it in an egalitarian society such as ours, may be necessary for the survival of civilization." (p. 256)

Sign of the Times

As bizarre, self-contradictory, and refutable as his pronouncements are, Douglass is not an isolated crackpot. A fellow conspiracy theorist with whom he shares much common ground is Lyndon LaRouche, a notorious neo-fascist with documented links to US intelligence agencies. LaRouche's "National Democratic Party Committee" organized the intensely homophobic campaign in 1986 for California's Proposition 64, which, had it not been rejected by voters, would have mandated an AIDS quarantine. In 1989, Douglass and many key LaRouchites spoke at a conference which focused on various conspiracy theories for the origin of AIDS.²³

The "scientific" source that the LaRouchites used for their reactionary campaign is Robert Strecker, M.D., who also addressed the conference. Douglass has worked closely with

Strecker, considers him a mentor, and dedicates *AIDS: The End of Civilization* to him.

Michael Novick reported in *White Lies/White Power* that within the far right, it is "The

"The LaRouche groups are particularly dangerous because, despite their fascist orientation, they have been attempting to recruit from black groups for some time."

LaRouche groups that are particularly dangerous because, despite their fascist orientation, they have been attempting to recruit from black groups for some time." The political analysis of Bo Gritz, head of the "Populist Party" is another source for AIDS conspiracy theorists. As Novick's book shows, the "Populists" use anti-business rhetoric to try to recruit among the left, but the organization has deep roots in the Ku Klux Klan and strong ties to the extreme white-supremacist Christian Identity.²⁴

make preemptive military strikes against Russia (p. 138); abolish the UN and WHO (p.120); and stop all illegal Mexican immigration into the US (p. 253). Then there are his more specific proposals: mandatory testing for HIV (p. 66); quarantine of all those with HIV (pp. 165-66); removal of HIV-infected children from school (p. 161); and incarceration, castration, and execution to stop prostitution. (p. 158) He argues that if we don't overcome a tradition "where civil rights are more revered than civil responsibility," hundreds of millions will die. (p. 165) While such proposals may further the right's law-and-order agenda, a wealth of public health and activist experience has shown that such repressive measures are counterproductive. Discrimination and repression drive those with HIV and its high-risk activities underground, mak-

LaRouche groups that are particularly dangerous because, despite their fascist orientation, they have been attempting to recruit from black groups for some time." The political analysis of Bo Gritz, head of the "Populist Party" is another source for AIDS conspiracy theorists. As Novick's book shows, the "Populists" use anti-business rhetoric to try to recruit among the left, but the organization has deep roots in the Ku Klux Klan and strong ties to the extreme white-supremacist Christian Identity.²⁴

23. Agenda, "World Conference on HIV-AIDS & Global Population," Nov. 27-29, 1989, Holiday Inn Hotel, Philadelphia, Penn.

24. Michael Novick, *White Lies/White Power* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1995), p. 309. For an example of a speech by Gritz, see Terrance Jackson, *AIDS/ HIV Is Not A Death Sentence* (New York: Akasa Press, 1992).

20. Lawrence Peirez, "The Telephone Hate Network," ADL Bulletin, Sept., 1965.

21. William C. Douglass, M.D., "New AIDS Scandal Brews," *The Spotlight*, Oct. 5, 1987.

22. Glenn Garelik, "Desperately seeking solutions; chronic fatigue syndrome," *American Health*, May 1992.

When such forces propagate AIDS conspiracy theories among African Americans, one result is to divert people from the grassroots mobilization around prevention and education that could foster greater cohesion, initiative, and strength within the black community. At the same time, the right fans the flames of homophobia which combines with the problem of racism within the predominately white gay and lesbian movement to undermine a potentially powerful alliance of the communities most devastated by government negligence and inaction on AIDS.

We live in a strange and dangerous period when the attractive mantle of "militant anti-government movement" has been bestowed on ultra-right-wing, white supremacist groups. The main reason they can get away with such a farce is that their big brother — the police state — did such an effective job in the blood-soaked repression of opposition groups such as the Black Panthers, which was rooted in the needs and aspirations of oppressed people.

With people's movements silenced, the right has coopted the critique of big government and big business to achieve new credibility. The seedbed of discontent comes from the erosion of the previous guarantee of economic security and relative privileges for a wide range of white people in the middle and working classes. The right, however, portrays the threat as coming from the inroads made by women, immigrants and people of color. Thus their vehemence and militancy spring from the same legacy of white supremacy and violence that is the basis of the government they criticize and their program is in essence a call to return to the pioneer days' ethos that any white male had the right to lay a violent claim to Native American land, African American labor, and female subservience.

Whatever the right's motives, the practical consequences are clear: There is a definite correlation between believing these myths and a failure to take proven, life saving preventive measures. In the end, the lies promulgated

by the likes of Douglass, Strecker, and LaRouche kill.

The Real Genocide

The *New York Times*, in an editorial expressing alarm that an "astonishing" number of African Americans believe in conspiracies — with AIDS as a prime example — could only understand the phenomenon as "paranoia."²⁵ Educated white folks, to the degree they are aware of such matters, tend to be "amazed" by such beliefs. But what is truly amazing is that so many whites are so out of touch with the systematic

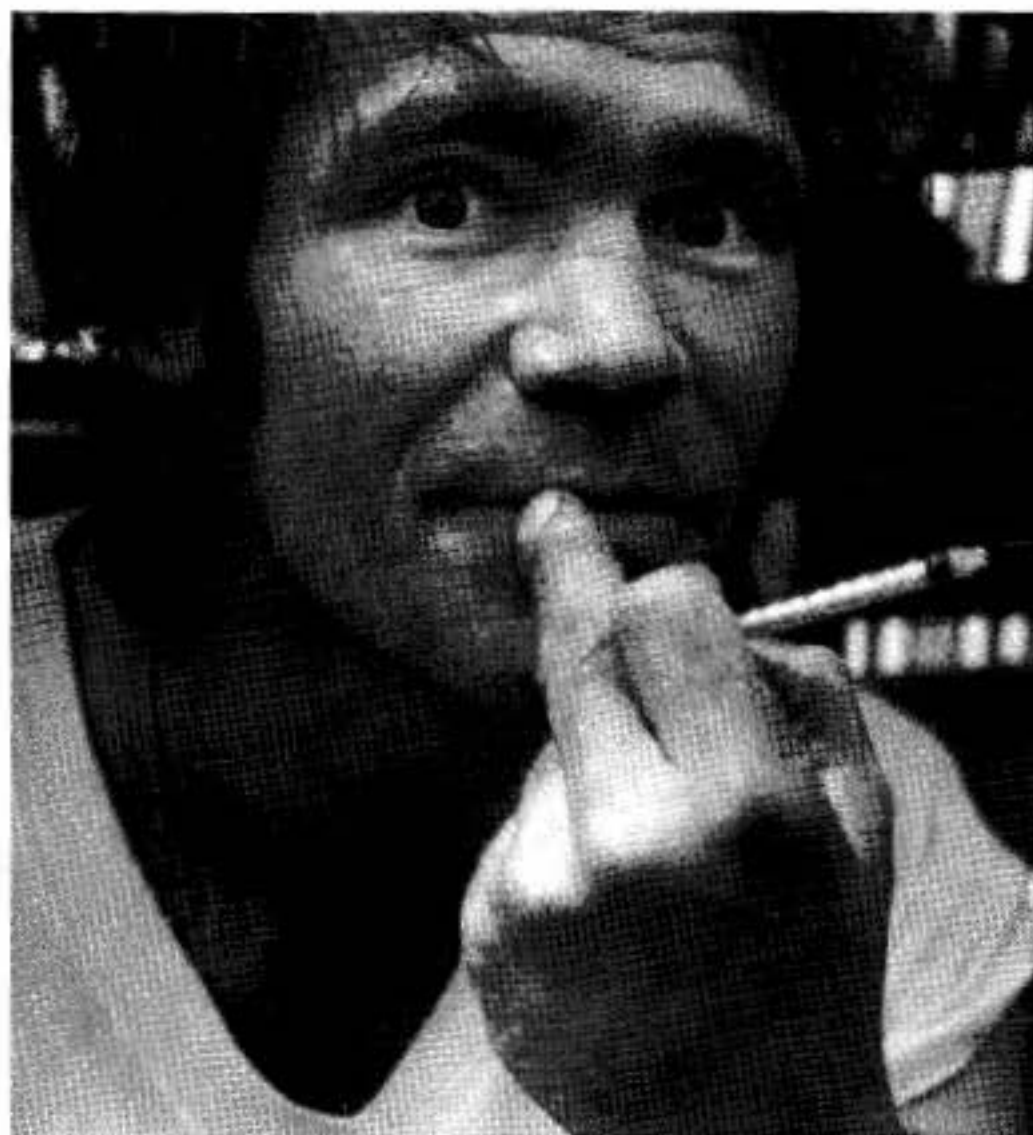
on African Americans is not a "mainstream" public issue, black people know what they are experiencing. They also know that the radical gap between the life expectancy of African Americans and that of white Americans was there even before AIDS burst onto the scene. A 1980 Health and Human Services Department report showed that there were 60,000 "excess deaths" among blacks. This is the number of black people who would not have died that year if blacks had the same mortality rate as whites. That figure marks more unnecessary deaths in one year alone than the

total number of US troops killed during the entire Vietnam War.

The black body count is a direct result of overwhelming black/white differences in living conditions, public health resources, and medical care. The infant mortality rate — a good indication of basic nutrition and health care — is more than twice as high among black babies as among whites, while black women die in childbirth at three times the rate of whites. There are also major differences in prevention, detection, treatment, and mortality for a host of other illnesses, such as high blood pressure, pneumonia, appendicitis and cancer.²⁶ Comparisons are even starker when class as well as race is factored, and, of course, the health status of both Latinos and poor whites is worse than that of more affluent whites.

The situation has worsened since 1980 with the advent of AIDS and the new wave of tuberculosis. TB, long considered under control in the US, began a resurgence in 1985. One big factor was the greater susceptibility of HIV-infected people to TB. But TB is an important example for another reason: It has always been closely linked to poverty. Crowded tenements, homeless shelters, jails, inadequate ventilation,

26. The summary in the two paragraphs above is based on Steve Whitman and Vicki Legion, "Black Health in Critical Condition," *Guardian* (New York), Feb. 20, 1991. The rates for infant and maternal mortality here, as well as rates for TB, syphilis, and other STDs below are based on yearly incidence. References to HIV rate are to seroprevalence.



Despite media stereotypes, most drug users are white, but selective laws and enforcement mean that blacks are more often incarcerated and given harsher sentences.

attack by the government-medical-media establishment on the health and lives of African Americans. The stone wall of calculated ignorance and denial that blacks face every day is a fine surface on which to write conspiracies, and may explain why some people become vested in a plot scenario that seems to crystallize the damage.

But the problem is far more powerful and pervasive than any narrow conspiracy theory can capture. And although the health horror this society imposes

25. "The AIDS 'Plot' Against Blacks," *New York Times* (editorial), May 12, 1992.

and poor nutrition all facilitate the spread of this serious disease. Given the distribution of wealth and privilege, it is not surprising that the rate of TB for black Americans is twice that for white Americans.

African Americans are also assailed by a range of problems such as high stress, poor nutrition, and environmental hazards. One significant example of environmental hazards is the excessive blood levels of lead in children — a condition with proven links to lowered academic performance and to behavioral disorders. In 1991, 21 percent of black American children had harmful quantities of lead in their blood, compared with 8.9 percent of all US children.²⁷ In addition to disease, the high rate of black-on-black homicide — a secondary but particularly painful source of needless deaths — is in its own way a corollary of the frustration and misdirected anger bred by oppression.

STDs and Drugs

The evidence is clear that far from being a mysterious new development, AIDS and other epidemics and health hazards flow most easily along the contours of social oppression. There are two particular ways in which the racist structure of US society fosters the spread of HIV: The public health system fails to stem the spread of sexually transmitted diseases (STDs); and the legal system seeks only to punish drug abusers rather than treat them or ameliorate the underlying social and economic causes.

A major risk factor for HIV transmission is untreated STDs. These infections can concentrate HIV-laden white blood cells in the genital tract; and can also cause genital sores, which are easier points of entry for HIV.²⁸ Although STDs can be readily contained by responsible public health programs, rates began to soar for blacks in the mid-1980s, with, for example, a doubling of syphilis for blacks from 1985 to 1990. At the same time, rates have remained



Inmates who go back on the streets can either spread AIDS or AIDS awareness. Here, prisoners in the maximum security cell block at Angola.

stable for whites. This grave racial difference probably results from the lack of adequate STD clinics and the failings of public health education, along with the more general breakdown in social cohesion and values that can affect communities under intense stress.

Drugs, along with the violence and police repression that accompany them, constitute a plague in their own right for the ghettos and barrios. However, the public perception that illicit drug use is more prevalent among non-whites is wrong. Household surveys conducted by the National Institute of Drug Abuse show that African Americans, 12 percent of the US population, comprise 13 percent of illicit drug users. Where there is a tremendous difference, though, is in incarceration. Seventy-four percent of the people in prison for drug possession are African American.²⁹

There is also a major racial disparity in terms of drug-related infection by HIV.³⁰ While partially a result of which drugs are used and how they are used, there is certainly a big and deadly difference in access to new (sterile) needles and syringes through either

pharmacies or personal networks. Also, on the street, the police are much more likely to stop and search blacks and Latinos. This practice deters injection drug users of color from carrying personal sets of works (in states where they are illegal) and pushes them instead to share needles at shooting galleries.

Criminal Negligence

The latest example of the public health failing concerning AIDS is hardly known beyond the immediate circles of AIDS workers. Studies completed in 1993 showed that the previously recommended — and widely disseminated — protocol for cleaning needles with bleach does not work.³¹

Yet there has been no wide-scale effort to sound the urgently needed alarm about this grave danger.

The literature since 1993 has delineated a new, more effective bleach method that entails using 100 percent undiluted bleach (as opposed to a 10 percent solution) and holding the bleach or rinse water in the needle and syringe, while shaking and tapping, for a full 30 seconds for each step of the nine-step process. However, most IDUs do not even look at new handouts because they believe they already "know" the bleach

27. *New York Times*, Feb. 7, 1996.

28. Judith Wasserheit of the CDC, "Heterogeneity of heterosexual transmission: The roles of other STDs," presentation at the XI International Conference on AIDS, Vancouver, July 10, 1996, Abstract We.C.453. She claimed that access to STD clinics reduces incidence of HIV by an estimated 42 percent.

29. Marc Mauer and Tracy Huling, *Young Black Americans and the Criminal Justice System: Five Years Later* (Washington, DC: The Sentencing Project, 1995), p. 12.

30. Several studies on drug use, race, and HIV are summarized in Clare Regan, ed., *Justicia*, Dec. 1995. Calculations from the figures presented there indicate that the HIV rate among black IDUs is five times higher than the rate among white IDUs.

31. CDC, et al., "HIV/AIDS Prevention Bulletin," US Department of Health and Human Services, Mar. 19, 1993: "New Recommendations for Disinfecting Injection Equipment," *Medical Alert*, Oct/Nov. 1993.

method. In addition, public health authorities have taken no responsibility for the type of training it takes to get an IDU, anxious to get high, to properly complete such a complex and time-consuming process.³²

One reason the authorities haven't trumpeted warnings about the problems with bleach may have more to do with politics than public health: The assumption that there is an easy method of bleach sterilization serves as a buffer against pressure to implement sorely needed needle exchange programs. There is impressive evidence that these programs, which allow IDUs to obtain new, sterile needles and syringes, are highly effective in reducing HIV transmission, while there is no evidence that they lead to any increase in drug use.³³ Needle exchange programs could even serve as an outreach and contact point for reducing drug use — if "anti-drug" politicians allocated funds for treatment instead of incarceration.

Despite the clear public health evidence, many politicians have opposed needle exchange programs out of fear of being labeled "soft on drugs." Meanwhile, the rate of HIV (seroprevalence) among IDUs in states where needles are proscribed is five times higher than in states where they are legal.³⁴

Tens of thousands of IDUs, their lovers, and their children have been condemned to die because health agencies won't advertise their mistakes and because politicians posture for political advantage by banning the use of federal AIDS funds for needle exchange programs.

Shared needles is just one area of potential risk reduction. For overall prevention to work, the most effective and documented method of sharply reducing HIV transmission is peer education.³⁵ Homeboys and homegirls with

appropriate training in HIV/AIDS information speak the same language, live in the same situations, and can work with the people in their communities in the consistent, caring way needed to change risky behaviors.

Meanwhile, prisons provide fertile ground for peer education. They have some of the highest HIV rates in the US, and people who might have been constantly on the move in the street are now stationary and congregated. The vast majority of prisoners eventually

While US government plots such as the secret radiation and Tuskegee experiments do in fact exist, the damage they've done is small compared to the high human costs of the everyday functioning of a two-tiered public health system rooted in racism, sexism, and profiteering.

return to their outside communities — where they can spread either AIDS awareness or AIDS. But prison administrations have generally been hostile to peer-led HIV/AIDS education; only a pitiful handful of such programs exist, and those are often hamstrung by bureaucratic restrictions.

Allowing misinformation about cleaning needles to persist, blocking needle exchange programs, failing to treat STDs, and thwarting prison peer programs are major examples of the continuing official criminal negligence with regard to AIDS—and in particular, how this plague has been allowed to explode in the ghettos and barrios.

Fight the Power

Waiting for the government to act is suicidal. The peer education model shows that when we take responsibility for ourselves, our families, and our communities, we can make a big difference. Through grassroots organizing, communities can ally to demand social use of social resources instead of allowing tax dollars to go to massive military budgets and corporate welfare schemes. What we don't need are the fundamentally right-wing conspiracy theories of

Dr. Douglass and the like that lead us on a wild goose chase for the little men in white coats in a secret lab. The false information they purvey — that HIV is spread by casual contact but not by sex and drugs — generates cruelty toward people with AIDS and fosters support for a police state. In a bitter twist, these conspiracy theories divert people from identifying and fighting back against the real genocide.

While US government plots such as the secret radiation and Tuskegee ex-

periments do in fact exist, the damage they've done is small compared to the high human costs of the everyday functioning of a two-tiered public health system that is rooted in racism, sexism, and profiteering.

Overall, the living conditions of people of color in the US are a concatenation of epidemics that cascade through the ghettos and barrios: AIDS-TB-STDs; unemployment,

deteriorating schools, homelessness; drugs, internal violence, police brutality, wholesale incarcerations; violence against women, teen pregnancies, declining support structures for the raising of children; and environmental hazards. These mutually reinforcing crises flow from decisions made by government and business on social priorities and the allocation of economic resources.³⁶ Government policies that have such a disparate impact on survival according to race can be defined as genocide under international law. Whatever term is used, the cruelty of tens of thousands of preventable deaths is unconscionable. This reality is the basis for the scream of a people that "mainstream" society seems unable or unwilling to hear. These conditions are the real genocide in progress that must be confronted. ■

36. The numerous public health essays of Rodrick and Deborah Wallace provide excellent analysis of the sources and effects of this series of epidemics.

A longer version of this article is available from: Cooperative Distribution Service, Box 77452, National Capital Station, Washington, DC 20002.

32. Studies show that more than 80 percent of IDUs do not clean their injection equipment for more than 30 seconds. (*Medical Alert*, Oct. 11, 1993).

33. *The Public Health Impact of Needle Exchange Programs in the U.S. and Abroad: Summary, Conclusions, and Recommendations*, School of Public Health, UC Berkeley, and Institute for Health Policy Studies, UC San Francisco (Washington, DC: Department of Health and Human Services, 1993). A recent open letter from 32 AIDS prevention researchers declared that, after extensive research, experts are virtually unanimous that NEPs are highly effective in reducing HIV transmission without leading to increased drug use. (Daniel DeNoon, "Experts Unanimous: Needle-Exchange Programs Effective," *AIDS Weekly*, Jan. 29, 1996, pp. 3-4.)

34. *Ibid.*, p. 5.

35. There is virtual unanimity on this point in studies at the various "AIDS in the World" Conferences and in the studies of the National Academy of Science.

Off the Shelf:

CAQ'S BOOKS OF INTEREST

Death of Somoza:
The First-Person Story of the
Guerrillas Who Assassinated
the Nicaraguan Dictator

Tunnel to Canto Grande:
The Story of the Most Daring
Prison Escape in Latin
American History

by Claribel Alegria and
Darwin Flakoll

CURBSTONE PRESS, 1996, 161 & 193 PP., \$12.95 PB. EACH

Claribel Alegria is one of Central America's best known poets and novelists, but along with her recently deceased husband, Darwin Flakoll, she here turns her writer's eye to the inside stories of two of contemporary Latin America's most stirring guerrilla actions. Alegria's revolutionary credentials, developed in the Salvadoran and Nicaraguan struggles, granted her entrée to the innermost circles of two revolutionary groups, Peru's MRTA (Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement) and an itinerant cell of the Argentine ERP (Peoples' Revolutionary Army). The resulting volumes, based on hundreds of hours of taped interviews with the participants, are gripping, nail-biting, life-and-death narratives sure to keep readers on the edge of their seats.

Death of Somoza recounts the ERP cell's meticulously planned, months-long effort to track down and assassinate the former Nicaraguan dictator as he led a life of gilded exile in Asunción, Paraguay. On September 17, 1980, they succeeded. Ambushed as his limousine left his estate, Somoza died in a hail of machine-gun and bazooka fire. The ERP's action was more than revenge for Somoza's crimes; it decapitated the anti-Sandinista movement, and by forever precluding the possibility of Somoza's return, it helped solidify the nascent Sandinista government.

Tunnel to Canto Grande tells the story of the Peruvian MRTA's audacious and ultimately successful attempt to free 48 of its members, including its leader, Victor Polay, from Peru's highest-security prison. After renting a house under the shadow of Canto Grande's watchtowers, MRTA members worked around the clock for months to tunnel some 200 meters into the prison. All 48 prisoners escaped into a network of Lima safe-houses; the operation's only casualty was a prison guard hit over the head with a soda bottle when he had the bad luck to come upon the fleeing guerrillas.

Both books succeed wildly as true-life thrillers. Alegria and Flakoll have reconfigured their participant interviews into seamless narratives full of small but crucial details.

But the volumes also leave something to be desired. Both provide only the scantiest political context for the events they describe, an oversight more damaging in the case of the Somoza assassination, where both the action and the actors cross international boundaries and which involved the cooperation of various continental revolutionary organizations. In fact, the assassination of Somoza, a self-described act of "revolutionary internationalism," involved Argentine guerrillas who left Spanish exile to join the Sandinista revolution in 1979 and enlisted the help of Colombian, Brazilian, Paraguayan, and Argentine citizens or organizations in their plot.

While Alegria and Flakoll note the assassination's internationalist antecedents, they have next to nothing to say about this broader context; neither do they address the murky past and mysterious connections of the ERP cell's acknowledged head, Enrique Gorriarán Merlo (the book's "Ramon"), the only surviving member of the original ERP leadership. Gorriarán has connections to some of the hemisphere's most dramatic and haziest events: the Argentine "dirty war," the La Penca bombing (its supposed perpetrator allegedly died in another Gorriarán adventure), and the abortive, deadly La Tablada uprising in Argentina in 1989. Arrested in Mexico last year while traveling under an assumed name, Gorriarán is now in custody in Argentina. But the book that answers the questions surrounding his career has yet to be written.

Similarly, Alegria and Flakoll can be accused of operating with too much solidarity and not enough journalistic skepticism. For instance, they take at face value Gorriarán's claim that the ERP squad operated independently, with no foreknowledge by Sandinista leadership, at whose pleasure they stayed in Nicaragua. Neither do they question the size or origins of the Swiss bank accounts under Gorriarán's control. In both volumes, they rely almost exclusively on their subjects to provide a political analysis of their acts; they could well have subjected these analyses to rigorous scrutiny, but chose not to.

Death of Somoza and *Tunnel to Canto Grande* are page-turning reads and primary documents of the Latin American revolution. But because of their limited scope, they cannot stand as the definitive word in either case.

Secret and Sanctioned:
Covert Operations and
the US Presidency

by Stephen F. Knott

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS, 1996, ENDNOTES, BIBLIOGRAPHY, INDEX, 258 PP., \$27.50 HB.

"Does a real ... revolutionary movement exist there? Is it not, on the contrary, an artificial, concerted, contrived, patched up, miserable treason, paid for by our money, fomented by our people? Was it not solely occasioned by American interference — American instigation?"

What provoked this barbed senatorial query directed at a recalcitrant administration was not Reaganite atrocities in Nicaragua or Angola in the 1980s, but a presidential secret war nearly two centuries earlier. Hoping to foment a rebellion by American settlers in Spain's East Florida Territory and, ultimately, its incorporation into the United States, President James Madison had authorized secret agents with covert funds to enter the territory and create a secret army.

Madison's 1809 East Florida misadventure failed (Spain finally succumbed to diplomatic and economic pressure a decade later), but it was, Knott shows, no aberration. Relying on extensive archival research as well as a close — if arguable — reading of the Founders' debates over the proper scope of executive secrecy, the Air Force Academy historian exposes a lengthy, if

Knott's research is largely historical — only the book's final 25 pages deal with the post-World War II period — but his agenda is fully modern. In this regard, *Secret and Sanctioned* is a contemporary — and reactionary — political argument wearing the guise of a historical monograph. Something of Knott's political perspective comes through when he wonders in passing "whether Jefferson would have tolerated a Soviet-dominated Cuba." Brief

Knott has certainly broken new ground on the extent of previous covert operations, but informed critics have known for years that US presidents okayed operations such as the subversion of Hawaii (1890s), attempts to assassinate Pancho Villa (1916-17), or Joel Poinsett's machinations in Mexico and South America (1820s-40s). But even if, as he incorrectly argues, critics

Not that he bothers himself greatly about such concerns. In fact, democratic assent to covert policy initiatives, as expressed however imperfectly through congressional oversight, is for Knott an impediment to "secrecy and dispatch" in foreign policy-making. Instead, he identifies the "most important reform" being one that would entirely eliminate congressional intelligence committees. In his view, Congress' rarely- and weakly-exercised oversight function threatens the very national survival. Congress, he claims, has the unseemly habit of interfering in covert operations, and "for every abuse that may have been prevented by the new restraint, the national interest has been harmed by fragmented decision making." ■

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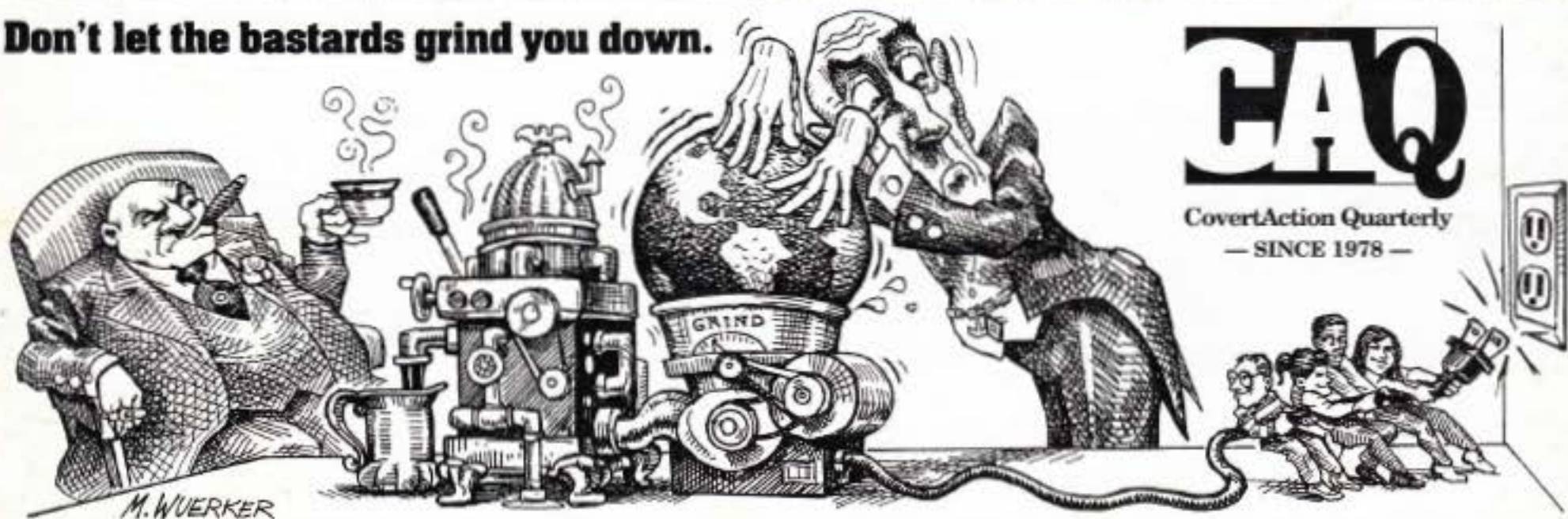
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